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No. 1070

Monday 24 February 2003

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INSIDE



BEST ALBUMS EVER

We put our music writers to the test and ask them what their fave album is - p.21

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A picture special on the small art details scattered around the toon p.15

TODAY

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THE RAH-FUL



DODGER

Heir to £70 million dodges £1 metro fare

By DAVID BARTLETT

THE MARQUIS of Bowmont and Cessford, heir to a £70 million fortune has been caught dodging the £1 metro fare.

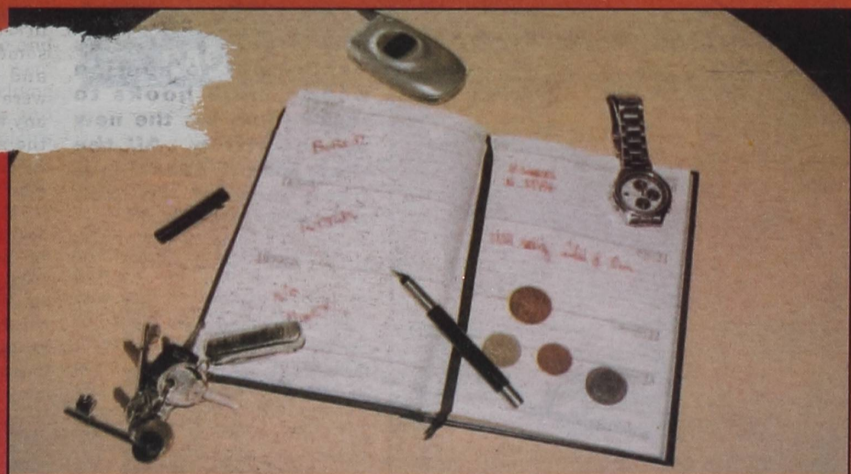
Charles Robert Innes-Kers caught at Jesmond had boarded at Haymarket. The inspector thought he was pulling her leg, when he gave his address as Floors Castle, Kelso in Scotland. Floors Castle is Scotland's largest lived in stately home and houses the Duke of Roxburgh.

The Marquis is believed to be a student in Newcastle and some have hazarded a safe guess that his student house does not quite measure up to his family house in the country that has 60,000 acres of land and a £1.5 million champion golf course.

A nexus spokesman said: "He was quite embarrassed about it but we got him bang to rights travelling without a ticket. It was obviously a one-off incident but he got caught and he will have to pay up".

The Marquis decided not to pay the on the spot £10 fine, and therefore had 21 days from the date it happened to pay or face possible court action and the prospect of having his name added to the 'Losers List'.

Feeling the Semester 2 blues?



DOES YOUR diary look like this? Do you have too much work, too little money and complain that it is too bloomin' cold?

Read our feature on Semester 2 blues on page 11, next to our EXCLUSIVE feature on one student's experience of rape and how she got on with her life on page 10.

Win Free Pizza for a Year - Page 18

The Courier

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MET SOLVES UNI STUDENT RAPE AFTER OPENING UP 1500 CASES

Rape cases dating back 16 years are reopened with initial success

By DAVID BARTLETT

The Metropolitan Police have started re-investigating more than 1500 rape crimes, some of which date back to 1987 and involve at least one Newcastle University student.

In early February 2003 the Met had its first success in court, when Mark Wilkinson, a 25-year-old salesman, was convicted and jailed for five

years for the rape of a 19-year-old Newcastle University student in 1995.

Senior officers are confident that hundreds of these cases can be solved because of advances in the forensic analysis of DNA. Of a batch of 25 cases that have already been looked at, six have matched samples stored on a national data base.

Chief Inspector Richard Walton said: "If I was a rapist I would be worried because sooner or later we are going to

get you.

He added: "These investigations will take my team all over the UK. A one in three 'hit' rate in 1500 cases would mean 500 cases solved. One in five or one in 10 would still be well worthwhile".

When hearing this news, Sarah Plimmer a third year medical student, philosophised: "It may give a lot of women peace of mind that these men are being brought off the streets, but for a lot of the victims it might be opening old

wounds. Which they may have learnt to deal with and want left alone".

This week is safety week, which aims to promote awareness and disseminate information about personal student safety.

Personal safety alarms will be available free of charge, as too are pamphlets with practical safety advice. There are also a number of events going on around campus to the promote safety week.

Historical studies sells off 3000 books

Historical books including some dating back centuries were sold off by the University in a bid to make room the new school office

By DAVID BARTLETT

LAST SATURDAY the Historical Studies School put to auction nearly 3000 books to make room for the new school office. All the other history books have been moved to the Robinson Library.

A treasure lost under the hammer was the signed memoirs of Desert Rat war legend Monty. The book "El Alamein to the River Sangro" was given as a present from Monty to the Head of the Foreign Office William Strang in 1946 when it was first published.

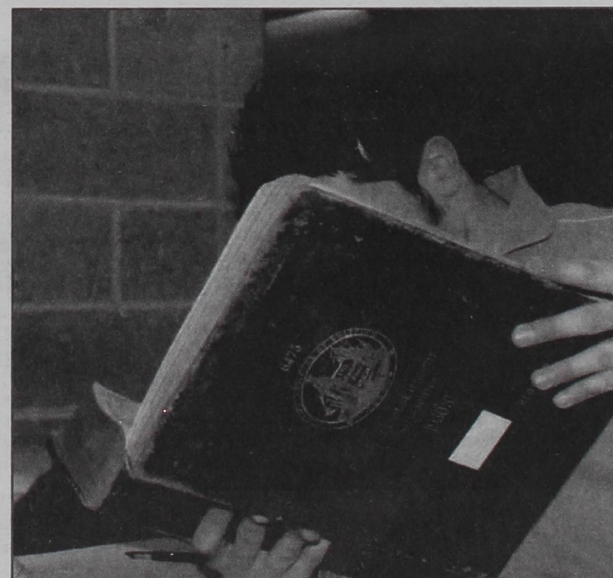
William Strang in turn gave the book to his son Colin who was a lecturer in history, who

then donated the book to the department.

He added: "It was a shame to see some of the books go, but some were in poor condition and many of the books gone were not much use to students any way. Although I doubt that the auction made even £1000, the books might otherwise have ended up in a skip".

Professor Patrick Salmon, told the Courier, "the books will be more accessible there, as the history library was only open during lunch times".

Professor Salmon, was keen to add, "the money from the auction is being set aside to build a fund for needy history students". This fund will amalgamate all donations to the school, and will become especially useful to students when top tuition fees are in place in a few years time.



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

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WEBSITE OFFERS CASH REWARDS FOR ESSAYS

Student lifestyle made easier with a new website that offers essays and offers incentives for posting essays.

By ADELE ROBINSON
and KATIE ARCHER

What are students known for? Studying, being short of cash and drinking.

A new website now allows you to access essays posted up by other students. Studying has never been so easy.

Essayfly, the student buddy web-site set up by the makers of Pro Plus are doing their upper most to make sure Newcastle students have the easiest time EVER.

Not only has the website posted hundreds of essays for students to access online but they are now encouraging users to post their own work up for a cash incentive.

A YAK is a term given to a person who lives

life to the full and the Young and Knackered, YAK's, juggle jobs or are studying with a hard living schedule of alcohol bingeing, junk food and lack of exercise. Which leaves little time for essays.

Adhering to its status as a students best friend, helping students to stay alert during demanding study times as well as a pick me up after a heavy night out, the Pro Plus web-site Essayfly, at www.proplus.co.uk, has also proved to be incredibly popular with students of GCSE, A-Level and particularly degree level. A Pro Plus spokesperson comments: "Young people have always burned the candle at both ends and now Pro Plus can offer assistance in academic study and leisure pursuits".

Now, by simply posting an essay onto the web-site, you will have the chance to win one of many fifty pounds HMV vouchers that are on offer.

We asked some Newcastle University students what they thought of Pro Plus's newly launched website

FRAGGLE COOKE



"I think it will encourage plagiarism and will our examiners be impressed reading several hundred versions of the same essay, I know I wouldn't. Surely a University degree is about developing your own ideas rather than rehashing somebody else's argument."

SIMON DAVIS



"Quite a beneficial idea, helpful for students in their essay writing."

LUCY ALLAN



"If I was desperate I would use it but I'm far too intelligent."

Students strut their stuff on stage

By ANNA POLLITT
NUFS Director 2003

WHILE THE capital buzzed with the glamour of London Fashion Week, the Newcastle University Fashion Show attracted huge crowds of its own. The show, organised by Newcastle students highlighted highstreet trends and showcased students own designs along with raising money for charity.

This year the NUFs raised money for The Tandroy Conservation Trust, a young organisation helping rural people of Madagascar preserve the natural resources they rely on to survive. The Fashion Show had an overall 24/7 theme, incorporating all aspects of everyday wear, including smart office wear, sports, swimwear, casual, clubbing and lingerie. Northumbria

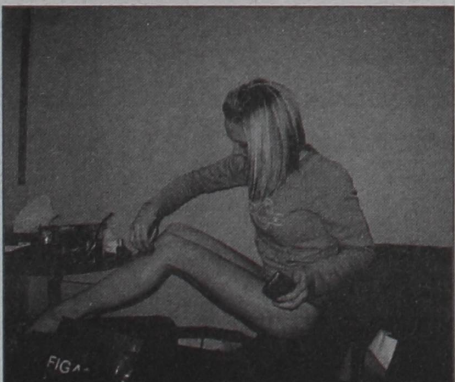
Fashion student Caroline Legg and Newcastle zoology students Natalie Hutton and Ruth Harries designed clothes for cutting edge Environmental and Indonesian themed walks.

The show's models were all Newcastle University students who were chosen for their professionalism and good looks. The models showcased clothes in walks carefully choreographed. The organisers were pleased by the success of the show. Leidau J Saytee and James Donovan (organisers) agreed that it went smoothly. Sarah Vardy acted as stylist, helping choose the clothes what the models wore and styling the models backstage over the two nights Donovan hopes to organise the event next year, saying "I also want to train people so when I'm not organising it, they'll know what they're doing".

Every year the CAT society put on a show that entertains hundreds of students and this years show certainly lived up to its reputation. At the end of the show an auction of show models saw audience members get hot under the collar in bidding wars, with models reaching an average of a hundred pounds each.

Saints Hairdressing styled the models hair for The Newcastle University Fashion Show 2003 and would like to offer Courier readers a fantastic two for one deal. Just take a friend who hasn't been to Saints, and this edition of The Courier and you'll get a free haircut!

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Date and Time: Tuesday 4th March - 6 pm

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"COME ON, COME ON" PAXMAN IS BACK FOR QUIZSHOW

After Newcastle's great performance last year on University Challenge, high hopes lie with this year's recruits

By TIM MAYNARD

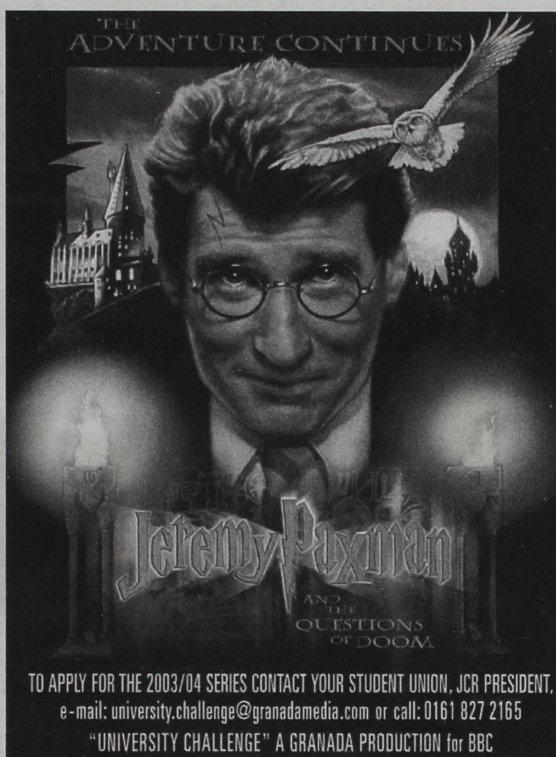
THE HUNT is on for this year's team to represent Newcastle in University Challenge - the popular TV quiz show for University students.

This summer, twenty-eight teams will come to Manchester to record the latest series of the long running quiz show. And it is hoped that Newcastle could emulate or better last year's admirable effort of reaching the quarter finals.

The host, Jeremy Paxman, insists that the show is as fresh as it ever was: "Although we hear the irritating phrase 'dumbing down' used about education, the best

students are still astonishing. It is remarkable what they know. And what they don't know. But the best of today's students are as good as ever they were". However Paxman points out that the show is more than just a good grasp of general knowledge: "Even an ability to regurgitate the entire contents of Britannica is no guarantee for success, for many of the most entertaining questions require an ability to think quickly, to think laterally, and to take a chance. Fortune favours the intuitive".

Students who believe they fit the bill and would like further information about the new series should contact the Students Union or ring 0161 827 2165, or e-mail university.challenge@granadamedia.com.



Union debate reveals students against war (BUT ONLY JUST)

By COURIER NEWS STAFF

Last Thursday saw Newcastle University's first debate on the issue of war in Iraq. The final result narrowly favoured no war.

The Debating Chamber in the Union played host to Jed Link and Sabina Cudic, the American national debating team, and a Newcastle team comprising of Chris Parr and Alex Ward.

Ironically, the American's were given the task of arguing against war in the Middle East, while the Newcastle students tried to convince the audience that war was, in fact, the only option left.

In the lively discussion, each side were allocated two speeches of seven minutes in which to propose their case, before the audience were given the opportunity to question the speakers on their differing stances. In the ensuing vote, a verdict of "no war" was recorded by the narrow margin of fifteen votes to twelve, with eight abstentions.



**International Grand Festival
Tuesday 4th March
City Hall @ 7.30pm**

Tickets Available at The Union Society Reception

Student Ticket Price - £2.50
Non student price - £5.00

All proceeds will be donated to



"A chance to see the brightest talent at Newcastle University."

What is the International Grand Festival?

An annual event that showcases the diverse cultures and talent within Newcastle University. Think of it as cross between the Royal Variety Performance and a circus.

Who's in it?

This year we will have performances from:

Indonesia
Mauritian Society
Afro-Brazillia (Capoeria)
South Asian Society
Revere (North Guide's tip for the top)
& many many more great acts

Why should I go?

Because it's a chance to see many of these great acts together for only £2.50 with all money going to charity.

WEBSITE THAT OFFERS LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP TO LONELY STUDENTS

By COURIER
NEWS STAFF

LONELY NEWCASTLE students no longer need to worry, as a new graduate website provides the answer. Friends Freeunited, is a new website aimed exclusively at undergraduates and graduates which is fast helping love across the campus.

Since its official release on the 10th February, by far the most popular facility has been the LoveMatch, a unique interactive matchmaker which allows people to view your credentials and then register their interest in you. The 'availability' of the subject is determined by a

traffic light system: green for go, red for no and amber for willing to stray if the offer is good enough! If you like the correspondent, you reply, get together and who knows where it could lead.

FreeUnited is not affiliated to the "Friends Reunited" website, despite also offering a similar "Lost & Found" service, where students and graduates can find or be found by old friends regardless of whether they attended school together.

Other facilities offered through the site include a Mentor Program which pairs students across the country with graduates in their chosen profession, and NetworkNeighbourhood; an exclusive social and business-networking zone.

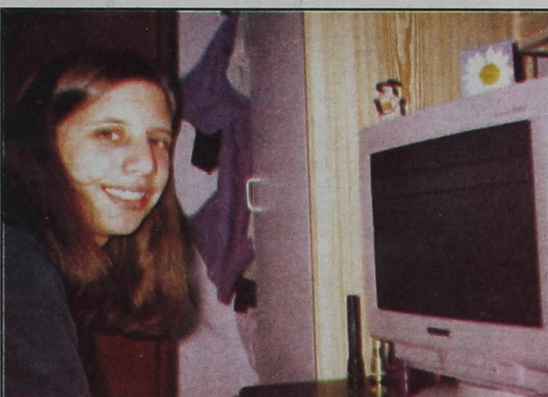
The website is easy to use with vivid graphics. The only fault is the

celebrity look-a-like section where members must choose a celebrity picture to best represent themselves. But who would ever admit they resembled the Anne Widdecome picture. Despite this, membership is free.

There was a mixed response within the student community, as a second

year politics student said: "No I really do not think anyone would join. There are many other options, its just tragic."

One second year female geography student was more upbeat saying: "I would use it, it would be a great way to meet new, interesting and affluent people!"



Census 2001 Shames North East

**Sad facts show
Newcastle in bad light**

By SARAH BAINES

CENSUS 2001 STATISTICS show that we the North-East population are poor, under-qualified and declining in numbers.

The government is consequently being accused of abandoning and neglecting the North-East region. The number of people living in the North East has dropped by 72,000, the largest drop in the country, and if other census statistics are to be believed, it's no wonder.

Thousands of people leave the region every year- especially talented young graduates- in search of better paid jobs in the south.

However, poor employment opportunities and population decline are apparently the least of our worries. The region has the highest number of people describing themselves as "not in good health". We are, it seems, an unhealthy area where processed and fast foods are causing serious health problems.

Kevin Curran, GBM Northern Regional Secretary, said, "the North East and the people who live here have been forgotten by Downing Street."

MEDICS TO SWIM CHANNEL

By COURIER NEWS STAFF

Several Newcastle Uni medics are set to swim the English Channel in an effort to raise funds for an African hospital. Their aim is to raise money for Kiwoko Hospital, in the remote Luweera Triangle region, in Uganda.

The students: Hannah Steele, Sheila Taylor, Molly Anderson, Fiona Fahey, Rebecca Preece and newly qualified doctor Louise Roberts, will all attempt to cross the channel in September this year.

Sheila visited the hospital last year and was so inspired by the dedication and hard work of

the hospital staff, that she now has decided to try and improve its financial position:

"The hospital is amazing, it looks after so many people with so few resources, it stuns me how much they manage to achieve."

These achievements are apparent when comparing the respective budgets for Kiwoko Hospital, and the General and RVI here in Newcastle. Kiwoko manages to sustain itself on just £36,000 a month, compared to the £1million a day in each of Newcastle's hospitals!

Kiwoko's medical facilities provide basic medical essentials for its surrounding community. These procedures include immunisation against various diseases, such as TB and provisions for safe and successful child birth.

The students swim will take place in September, when the Channel is at its calmest. However, Molly remains cautious about the size of the task: "Swimming the Channel is very difficult because of the tide and the weather. Swimming the Channel will be a huge achievement."

In order to make the task worthwhile, sponsorship is vital. Molly said: "We are looking for sponsorship from businesses and from family and friends."

It is hoped that this money can go some way to helping the lives of the surrounding community.



We're Not Alone...

By Tim Maynard

Birmingham

This column last week described the letterless letters page in Birmingham's 'Redbrick' student paper.

The editor, Nick Carson, was baffled: "Are we doing nothing wrong or everything wrong?" he moaned. This week he has finally been blessed with letters.

However all is not good. One letter complains about the headline used in a travel feature 'Monging out in Mongolia' and the offensive connotations such alliteration might cause. The editor replies by saying "we are constantly looking to improve the paper".

Based on the evidence of the past two weeks, Nick, scrapping the letters page might be a sensible place to start.

Oxford

'The Oxford Student' have apparently won "their most prestigious award", a half litre of ice cream at a 'world-famous mooing competition'.

Editor Natalie Toms responded by saying "I will allow no more crappy moo puns in my newspaper". However, it appears there is division at the top as her Co-Editor Charles Hotham was said to be "over the moon". Stand your ground, Natalie, stand your ground!

Cardiff

Cardiff University has its very own Gary Kasparov. Leighton Williams, a second year Chemistry student, has won the world's 35th Olympiad in Slovenia.

Williams had previously won a gold medal at the 1994 Chess Olympics but becoming a Master "definitely tops that". Williams, now 25, left school at the age of 16 to pursue a professional career in the game, but has since come to view chess "as a hobby".

Playing chess day after day becomes tedious". A fair point for all of us, but based on the evidence that Williams must have practised daily to take the title, it's unlikely he believes it himself.

Bristol

Finally, Bristol's paper "Epigram" has reported in a column similar to this the story of how plans to have a male and female stripper at our very own Union to promote safe sex have been scrapped because it was considered unnecessary and a security risk.

This was indeed faithfully reported by 'The Courier' back in November. The story makes the 'Epigram' on the 10th February. So, congratulations Bristol, on your fantastic up to the minute journalism!

War casualty gets the front page

Parr's Snips

The week in 400 words



Chris Parr

With tanks heading to the gulf, naval vessels amassing in the Middle East, and the weeks of weapons inspections drawing to an un-concluded end, there was only one story dominating the front pages of the nation's papers. David Beckham's eye.

World War 3's seemingly imminent, and the nation is captivated by Alex Ferguson and his deadly accurate shot - if Scotland have any sense then they should be first on the phone with an international call-up. I am sure he can play rugby as well, if they ask nicely.

Perhaps the obsession with the Ferguson-Beckham saga stemmed from the fact that this week has been a thoroughly depressing week when all things are considered. The phrase 'national tragedy', has been bounced around the media all too frequently in the last seven days. Iran mourned the death of 302 citizens as a military aeroplane came down in the south of the country and, perhaps even more harrowing, 125 people were killed in an apparently motiveless arson attack on a South Korean underground train.

Meanwhile, France is playing host to the annual Franco-African summit, to be attended by leaders of over 50 African states, including everybody's favourite dictator Robert Mugabe. With a certain degree of two-facedness, the Zimbabwean president was only allowed to visit France on the condition that the French sign an agreement to inflict further sanctions on the Mugabe regime, suggesting that the French do adopt the

stance that state-sponsored starvation is wrong, yet their government seem more than happy to give the President the credibility he so craves. Still, at least they're opposed to the Iraqi war.

Indeed, the rest of the news wasn't so much dominated by war as by anti-war. I have no doubt that everyone reading this was at least aware of, if not involved in the London demonstration which encompassed anywhere from 750,000 to 2 million participants (depending on whether you ask the government or the event organisers!)

However, there were a number of marches all over the world last weekend to bolster any figures compiled in the UK. Melbourne witnessed 150,000 marchers and Spanish authorities describe figures in Seville and Madrid as totalling 1.3 million. Participation in Muslim countries was significant, though considerably smaller, with an Islamabad protest seeing figures of 3,000. A poor turnout indeed - that's over a thousand fewer civilians than were killed by NATO bombs in the Afghanistan and Kosovo conflicts.

ABOUT A GIRL

"I've always wanted a go on crutches but instead I just have to hobble. So I apologise to anyone I've ever called 'hop-a-long' as the result of similar injuries."

At the risk of sounding paranoid or mad, or both, someone is out to get me. They don't want me to ever make it to the gym again after last week's column. I know this because yesterday on my way to said gym, I sprained my ankle and had to spend the rest of the afternoon in casualty. Which was great fun.

So now I've been told that I can't move for the next few days and have to stay at home with my leg propped up on stacks of pillows to make the tennis ball shaped swelling on my ankle go down. Attractive.

I'm not happy. Not because I'm not allowed to walk. Not because I can't go to the gym for the next two months. Not because of the huge amounts of stick I've received for managing to

trip over my own feet (whilst sober too!) and thus injure myself. But because I didn't even get given any crutches. I've always wanted a go on crutches but instead I just have to hobble. So I apologise to anyone I've ever called 'hop-a-long' as the result of similar injuries. I now know how you feel.

Normally given the chance to skip lectures for a few days, I would be dancing in the streets. But, apart from the fact that I can't actually dance in the streets, I feel strangely sad at the fact that I'm missing all the latest news on Chomsky and Middlemarch. Maybe it's more that I'm missing out on the gossip. Being at home is boring. I only have the Internet for company and I've discovered that there is a reason why daytime TV is only on when everyone is out - I don't think 'Doctors' will ever be up for a Bafta.

I haven't even got that much sympathy. Not

content with laughing at my hobbling, my loving boyfriend has taken to singing songs about walking just to rub it in. If I hear Walk This Way one more time, I'm going to scream. I can't even make a quick getaway - it takes half an hour to make it to the bathroom.

More than the boredom, I hate the feeling of not being able to do anything. I thought it would be great to have people jump to my every beck and call - I even thought about getting one of those little bells to ring when I need the TV channel changing. But, apart from the fact that no-one would ever talk to me again, I feel really bad. So a big thank you to Marc, my Grandpa (who should retrain as an ambulance driver) and my flatmates for putting up with me - I owe you one.

JENNIE LAWRENCE

Bec Says making doll houses is cool

I am currently constructing my perfect house. It is a little red and white striped lighthouse, made of old cardboard boxes and plastic takeaway containers.

All the furnishings are made to measure, be-afied and so very, very cool.

I have made a swinging double bed; something that I fear in real life may bring my bedroom ceiling down. But in this house, who needs logistics?

A fireman's pole is the way down from the top floor. My architect friend is very concerned about this 'how do you get back up?'

'Look, this isn't a structural model, you fly for God's sake!' I reply. You see, in this dolls house, anything is possible.

Other housemates have contributed in various ways - one made a toilet out of an egg box and another stood on and squashed the tiny Jacuzzi I'd made out of a margarine tub and bubble wrap.

The fun part is making the people to inhabit the house. Obviously I'm making a little plasticine Bec, but I'm divided between who to have with me; my boyfriend or Daniel Day Lewis... I think I'll make them both and they can just squabble amongst themselves.

There will be lots of kids though, to go on the tiny card-and-toothpick bunk beds. And if they are mischievous I can just unmake them.

I feel that this is the beginning of what will be a beautiful, mini, recycling-friendly metropolis.

I am going to start on a temple just as soon as my house is furnished, where the citizens can worship me as their creator.

Then I think I'll construct Bec-ingham palace to house my plasticine harem.

BECCA SNOW



HERE'S ONE WE MADE EARLIER !!

Psychic Selina Speaks with the Stars...



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

PISCES (20 February-20 March):

It's birthday season and always a magical time for Pisceans. You're natural kindness and generosity tend to make you everyone's favourite sign and as the focus turns on you this month you'll find a lot of love flooding your way.

ARIES (21 March-20 April):

Stars are sparkling all around you at the moment. You've been picked up by a refreshing wave of change that'll last for as long as you want and take you as far as you want to go. Just go with the flow and enjoy the ride.

TAURUS (21 April-21 May)

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.

GEMINI (22 May-22 June)

Your worst characteristic, superficiality, could do with being tackled this week; try looking beyond your mirror image and reach a little deeper. You may be surprised by what you find.

CANCER (23 June-23 July):

You're a hard little worker and it pays off, but don't forget to give yourself a break. Friends are waiting at the side lines to give you the support and affection you need, so allow yourself time to receive some of that love and attention that you deserve.

LEO (24 July-23 August):

If you're single but interested in someone, this is the week to do something about it! Let them know you're interested. What have you got to lose? If you crash and burn the worst you'll feel is a little bruised pride. Take some chances this week or you may never know.....

VIRGO (24 August-23 September):

You're a star with a whole load of energy bubbling inside, waiting to escape; just be sure that you find a positive way to use it or it'll turn into a nervous energy that'll drive you and everyone else mad. Look for people and places that'll keep you peaceful and serene.

LIBRA: (24 September-23 October)

The gods are smiling down on you offering plenty of golden opportunities this week. Just be sure that your tendency to indecisiveness and lack of confidence doesn't prevent you from making the most of what fate is offering you.

SCORPIO (24 October-22 November):

Life's been buzzing for Scorpios recently and not wanting to miss a moment you've no doubt been quoting that favourite Scorpio motto 'I'll sleep when I die'. Very courageous. But remember, though your carriage might not turn into a pumpkin at midnight, your brain might soon begin to resemble one. So get some rest!

SAGITTARIUS (23 November-21 December)

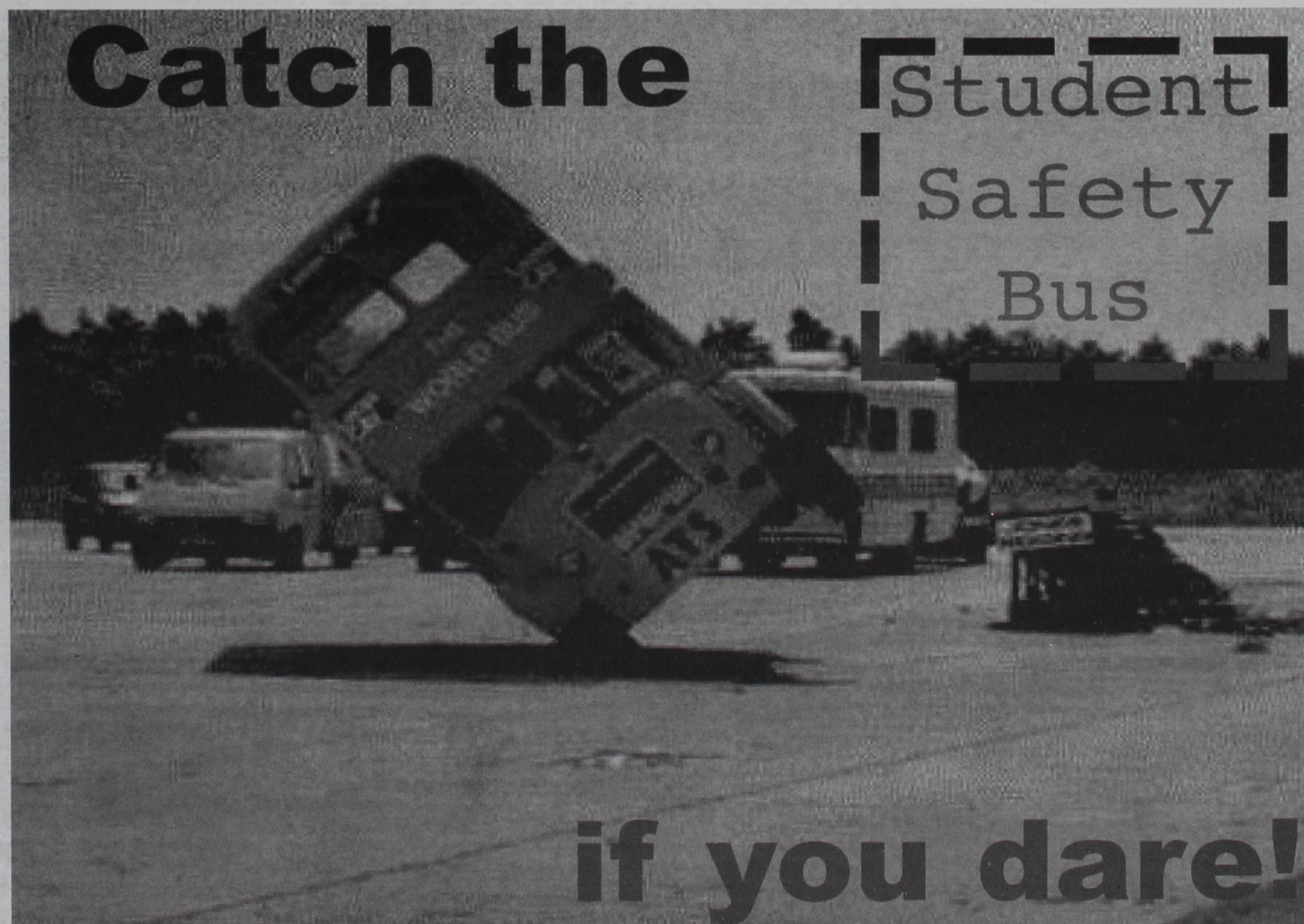
A new month is approaching and with it a fresh blank page to fill. Use this week to look at what you want to carry through from last month and what you want to leave behind and get ready to enter a new and vibrant chapter.

CAPRICORN (22 December-20 January):

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!

AQUARIUS (21 January-19 February):

Creativity is the key to success this week. Whether it's intellectual, physical or artistic, it'll give you the buzz you're looking for to live every moment to the full and feel truly alive.



Catch the

Student
Safety
Bus

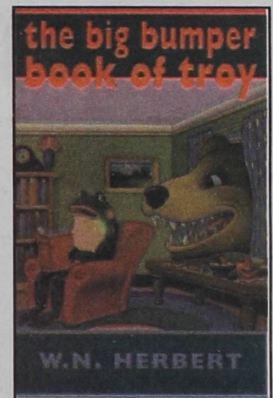
if you dare!

BRING BACK 80'S TV

Who says the 1980's are naff?

Stefanie loved them, and compiled her very own

Top 10 TV hits from the decade we tried to forget



By STEFANIE FOSTER

So, here I am - an aged crone of (almost) 21, with the wrinkles fast approaching and the prospect of taxes, pension plans and incontinence looming up ahead. The future is NOT looking bright. Now that I am beginning to feel the burden of age, I have begun to reminisce about the things I have left behind in the carefree days of my childhood. Ah, the Good Old Days: we had dodgy haircuts (Mum, I will never forgive you for that fringe); we had shoes with their own fairytale (Clarks Magic Steps, I mean YOU); and we had the best damned television shows a kid could have hoped for.

That's right folks - it was the 80s. As most of my memories of this decade seem to involve either the Fraggles or She-Ra, I can only conclude that 80s TV was a big part of my childhood. So, in memory of our happy childhood days, I offer you the creme de la creme of '80s kids' TV, in the hope that these fond reminiscences may re-ignite the quickly fading light of our youths.



THE OFFICIAL TOP TEN 80S KIDS' TV SHOWS

(as voted for by fellow 80s kids):

10 - TRANSFORMERS

These 'robots in disguise' consisted of the heroic Autobots, led by Optimus Prime, and the evil Decepticons, led by Megatron, whose sinister plan was to drain the earth's energy. The Autobots would be on hand every episode to put a stop to the Decepticon's designs, which is when the transforming took place: some became vehicles, others became weapons, and some even took on the form of dinosaurs (an idea adopted by the Power Rangers years later). Each robot's ability to transform was put to good use in the fight against the enemy - even the one who turned into a stereo (hey, even robots need entertainment).

9 - T-BAG

A fantastic programme about a witch called T-Bag, whose only object seems, on reflection, to have been the annoying use of the letter T (tea). Inside her T-Room she commanded her servant, a boy called T-Shirt, to make her cups of tea from the leaves of the sinister T-Plant, which helped to sustain her magical powers. To prevent T-Bag corrupting the English language further, a young girl had to go around collecting spoons (it's true, I swear!) which, when the set was completed, would secure T-Bag's banishment. T-shirt's job was to hinder the girl's quest, but he always switched sides in the last episode to help the girl destroy T-Bag. The first T-Bag was apparently Talula Bag, replaced in later episodes by her sister, Tabitha Bag, who conveniently had the same initials.

8 - GUMMI BEARS

An excellent Disney cartoon with a catchy theme tune. Each episode, the Gummi Bears would have to protect Princess Calla and her page, Cavin, as the power-hungry Duke Igthorn tried to seize King Gregor's throne. To prepare themselves to fight Igthorn's ogres, the Gummis would down a glass of gummi-berry juice and end up bouncing 'here and there and everywhere' - usually in the direction of Igthorn's fleeing ogres.

7 - RAGGY DOLLS

Yet another great theme tune! The Raggy Dolls were Hi-Fi, Back-to-Front, Lucy, Dotty, Claude, Princess and Sadsack, all of whom were condemned to the reject bin at Grimes Soft Toys. The Raggies had numerous adventures, in which their disabilities would always be put to good use (although I don't know how Sadsack became useful - I always thought his disability was being a bit dim).

6 - DANGERMOUSE

This crime-fighting rodent lived just outside Sherlock Holmes' residence on Baker Street, inside a red pillar box. Every episode, he and his nervous hamster sidekick, Penfold, would receive a mission from their 'chief', a walrus named Colonel K. The duo would then outwit various bungling criminals, including their arch-enemy Baron Greenback, a greedy toad, and his crow assistant, Stiletto.

5 - MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD

This show followed Esteban, the young son of an explorer, in his search for El Dorado. Accompanying him on his quest were his friends Zia and Tao, a parrot, and Spanish navigator Mendoza. The group were constantly pursued and hindered



by Senior Gomez and the Spanish armed forces, but they always escaped with their solar-powered ship, Solaris (pretty technologically advanced for its day), or in the memorable Golden Condor.

4 - KNIGHTMARE

Surely the best game-show of all time, Knightmare took place in dungeon scenes, where a dungeoneer (a kid with a big helmet on) would be guided through various traps and perils by three of his friends, who watched his progress through a 'magic mirror'. The dungeon master, the bearded Treguard, would often help the kids in their quest, which was to complete the dungeon and retrieve a crown, shield, or similar object.

3 - HE-MAN & THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

This was one of the best-loved 80s cartoons. By holding aloft his sword and yelling "By the power of Grayskull, I have the power!" the effeminate Adam (high-pitched voice, pink shirts) would be miraculously transformed into the bronzed muscleman known as He-Man (complete with a kinky pair of fluffy red Speedos). Adam's cowardly pet, a green and yellow tiger called Cringer, was also transformed into the mighty Battle-Cat, who helped He-Man in the fight against Skeletor's evil forces.

2 - RAINBOW

"Paint the whole world with a rainbow!" We all remember the opening credits to this 80s classic, and who could forget its stars? There was Geoffrey, the human; Bungle the bear; George the effeminate hippo; and Zippy, the... Ahem. Well, no one ever quite

figured out what Zippy was - although I'm pretty sure that if he'd been in the Raggy Dolls, he'd have been in the reject bin for sure. Other Rainbow regulars were the singing and dancing trio, Rod, Jane and Freddy. The only other thing I remember about Rainbow is that Geoffrey, Bungle, Zippy and George always slept in the same bed together, which resulted in terrible playground rumours which I neither condone nor substantiate.

1 - THUNDERCATS

My survey showed this classic cartoon to be the definite favourite, and it is a victory well deserved. Our heroes were Lion-o, Lord of the Thundercats; Panthro, the mechanic who built the Thundertank; Tygra, the architect behind Cats' Lair; Cheetara, the speedy one; Wilykit and Wilykat, the mischievous kids; and Snarf, the loyal (but highly annoying) nanny and cook. The Thundercats' main enemy was Mumm-Ra, who could change from a withered



and bandaged corpse to a flying, strengthened version of himself, with the incantation: "Ancient spirits of evil, transform this decayed form to Mumm-Ra, the ever-liviiiing!" However terrifying his new form first appeared, Mumm-Ra fell considerably in my esteem when it was revealed that simply showing him his reflection had him fleeing back to his tomb. Slithe, Monkian, Jackalman and numerous other baddies tried every week to get rid of our heroes, but they never managed to succeed. Thundercats - Hoooooo!

Please do not blame me if your favourites aren't included - the ten were chosen by survey, and it would be impossible to write about all the good 80s shows (there are so many!) in this much space. But if you would like to know more, check out www.80snostalgia.com, www.yesterdayland.com and www.glitter-net.co.uk. They don't make 'em like they used to.

"I woke up, and found myself in my own bed, pink sheets."

RAPE: This moving account of a rape details what happened to one female Newcastle student and how she begin to get on with life. If you only read one feature in *The Courier* this year, make sure it's this one.

You might think I look like a normal person if you saw me walking down the street. You might not notice me when you were buying your shopping and I stood in front of you in the queue. You might not even pick me out of a crowd dancing in a club. You will not see my scars. You will not look at me and know that I have been raped.

Wide eyed and fidgeting I arrived at university. I hurriedly made acquaintances, and soon they became my friends. Rapidly I came to the conclusion that I loved the freedom of living in a new city. I was enjoying life...

In early December my friends and I went to a club. It was nearing Christmas and we were in high spirits. At midnight I was seen leaving the club with a man. Flash: I was lying on a bed with blue sheets, someone on top of me. At 5am, crashing and banging was heard (by my next door neighbour in the hall of residence) and a man's voice coming from my room. Flash: I woke up, and found myself in my own bed, pink sheets.

I stumbled from my bed, still in my clothes, and began undressing. The flares that I was wearing from the night before were ripped around the waist. I wasn't wearing the thong that I had gone out in. Tears welled up in my eyes. My thigh and bottom pounded with

cheeks felt hot and angry. A swollen bump upon my opposite hip throbbed faster as my heartbeat quickened. Blood trickled down the inside of my thigh. The tears fell.

The steam rose from the hot bath and the fragrance of raspberries gently wafted toward my nose. I climbed into the steaming water and relaxed as the waves lapped around my body. I remained unmoving as my fingers turned to prunes. From my swollen eyes tears still fell steadily.

The bath water had turned cold by the time I dragged myself from the tub. My body shivered as I, for

"I woke up, and found myself in my own bed, pink sheets."

the first time thought that I had been raped.

Speaking to my friends, and desperately trying to piece together the information that I remembered, I came up with the events that I have already related of the night before. I told no one of my fears.

Feeling deservedly alone I went to my room, stripped the beds of the spoiled sheets, and curled up in a ball. Turning the events of the night over and over in my mind kept me awake all night. When daylight finally flooded through my curtains, I left my room and knocked upon a friend's door.

"Can you come with me to take the morning after pill?" I asked, shame colouring my cheeks scarlet.

Memory of what I told people when, fails me, as the days seem to blur into a haze of forgetfulness. It was as though I was in limbo, and my life, a film I was watching.

Two weeks later, convinced I had put the incident behind me, I again went out with friends. To help me relax in the club, I had a few shots of vodka. For courage to go out onto the dance floor, I had a few shots of vodka. When approached by a man I needed a few shots of vodka to calm me down. Increasingly uneasy and getting steadily drunker I stumbled around trying to find the friends I had lost on my last visit to the bar. Panic seized me. My heart pounded in my chest. A threatening man offered me ecstasy.

As fast as I could, I ran. My friends must have seen me for they gave chase. I stormed blindly into

roads, through bushes, and crammed myself into a small space, between a building and a fence. Tears streaming down my burning cheeks, I screamed at my friends to leave me, I wanted to be alone; I did not need their help. I would stay hidden in the bushes, curled up in the mud; I did not care what happened to me. I wanted the world to swallow me up; to undo my existence, to make it such that I had never been. Through persuasion and perseverance on my friend's behalf I finally allowed them to lead me home.

It is rarely that one tests friendship to such extremes, but I believe that I pushed those fantastic people to the limit that evening. When I awoke the next day, it was kindly put, but insisted that I see a professional. I swore that I would not use alcohol to numb my feelings again.

Visiting the university councillor for the second time, I decided not to make another appointment. My year continued as though nothing had happened.

Returning to my family home for the summer, I found myself a job in a local pub. Isolated and alone, I discovered a new friend, who worked alongside me. Quickly the platonic friendship developed into a special romantic one. Confiding in him about the rape, he held me close and I felt safe.

My mother was tearing her hair out with me; there were arguments almost every night. By staying in my room, and working lots I tried to avoid seeing my family at all. Physically things moved slowly between my new romantic interest, and it wasn't until nearly the end of the summer that we finally slept together. Having got what he wanted, he did not want to see me again.

Things at home got worse, I had nowhere to turn. Trapped and isolated another thunderous argument between me and my mum fired up. Timing it a week before I was to go back to university, and just days after my pretended relationship had fallen through, I decided to leave. Snatching the car keys as I flew out of the front door, my mother chased after me. She stood behind the car so that I could not reverse off the drive. Tears blurred my vision, and stung my cheeks as again I found myself trapped and isolated. My father forced me up the stairs, bellowing at the top of his lungs, threw me inside my bedroom, screaming that if I came down without an apology my life would not be worth living.

Contact Numbers:

Newcastle General Hospital - 0191 219 5013 or 0191 219 5011 - These numbers are specifically for those people wanting to be tested for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's). When making the appointment no intrusive questions will be asked, and all information treated in the strictest of confidence.

REACH - Rape Examination Advice Counselling Help
Rhona Cross Centre - Newcastle - 0191 212 1551
Ellis Fraser Centre - Sunderland - 0191 565 3725

When making the appointment, again no intrusive questions will be asked. The (female) counsellors are trained in helping men and women who have been sexually assaulted. They will be happy to discuss any worries that you have. They will be able to arrange any medical appointments you may need. The counsellor is not a police officer and what you discuss with her will not be automatically disclosed to the police.

The Drug Rape Trust - 0170 231 7695 - drugrapetrust@hotmail.com - www.drugrapetrust.com - The trust is there to support victims and provide information.

Convulsing with sobs, I threw myself onto my bed, screamed into my pillow, and tried desperately to stop shaking. Just as I began to believe that the tears would never stop, calmness seemed to overtake me. Taking a few deep breaths, drying my eyes I opened my bedroom door and followed the stairs down to the living room.

'I was raped.' I told my mother. The argument forgotten she took

"I went to my room, stripped the beds of the spoiled sheets, and curled up in a ball."

me in her arms and did the one thing I had been wanting for almost a year: hugged me and told me that she loved me, said that it didn't matter, and scolded me for not telling her sooner.

A great feeling of relief washed over me and as it did, again tears began to fall. All I wanted was my mum to tell me that she was going to make it better. All the pain, fear and loneliness seemed suddenly halved, and it seemed to hit me all at once that this was really my life. In telling my mother I suddenly understood that somebody had drugged and raped me. Surreally though, it was okay because she and my dad were going to help me through it.

Arriving back at university for the beginning of my second year, my mum came with me. She went with me to the hospital so that I could be sure that I was not infected with a sexually transmitted disease (a worry that I had felt continually). At the hospital I wrote an anonymous report to the police, and was given

information about REACH, a counselling service specifically for victims of sexual assault. A week later, my tests came back clear.

In writing this article I have tried to paint a picture of what it is like to discover that you have been drug raped. My intention, to educate people about this type of crime, and to give some incentive to please follow some guidelines that will not infringe too much on your social life, although if successful you will never discover that you came close to this type of danger.

The questions that perhaps you are asking about my story are probably the questions that I have asked myself repeatedly. Who was the man? All I can remember about the man is half of a conversation that we had as he stood next to me at the bar. He said that he was a student. How did he know where I lived? Perhaps he was a student who lived in the same hall of residence as me. Perhaps he was a student who lived there the year before. Perhaps he was not a student at all, and I told him I was a student. Perhaps he was someone I knew, who spiked my drink earlier than I think it happened. To these questions and more I can only guess at the answers.

The worst thing that happened in my life was being raped. I wish more than anything that this will never happen to anyone else. If by writing this account, I can save anyone, it will be worth the hurt that I have been through. I cannot begin to explain the impact that this has had on my life. It has made me realise what a terrible place the world can be. Yet it is not all doom and gloom. I am still here, and as I said at the beginning, I do not stand out from the crowd as a victim of sexual assault. So my life will eventually get back to normal, and I will go on living.

Guidelines to keep safe:

1. Go out in a group, so that you can watch your friends and they can watch you. Men as well as women are victims of drug rape, so watch all of your friends.
2. If your drink tastes strange or looks funny, leave it and get a fresh one. If you feel strange (e.g. too drunk) when you should not, tell a friend that you trust.
3. If you haven't seen that a drink bought for you is safe, don't take a chance. Especially if bought by someone that you do not know.
4. If you leave a drink unattended, don't go back to it. Non alcoholic drinks can be drugged as easily as alcoholic ones, so take the same precautions.

bruises that were beginning to shine purple through the skin. My

Semester Two Blues

It's the middle of term, it's cold outside and you're overloaded with work. And that's just for starters. You're not alone. So we've kindly written a piece about the blues.

By CLAIRE BYRNE
and HELEN LAWMAN

What is the meaning of life?...Dunno but there's sure as hell no way that any of us will find it this semester. Have you ever noticed that everything has a horrible habit of going decidedly pear shaped just after Christmas?

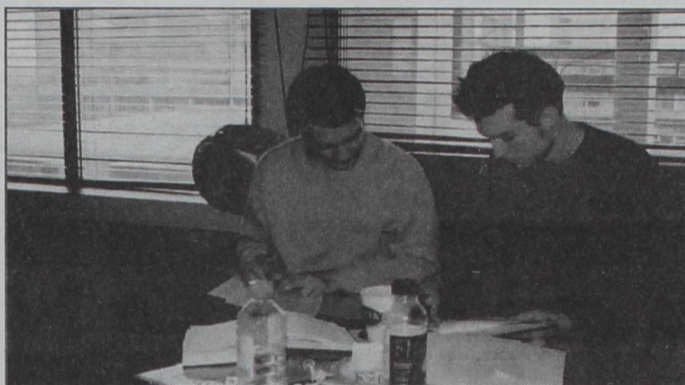
The honeymoon period of the first semester is well and truly over and all but most of us are left with are maxed-out overdrafts, the threat of failed exams looming, the inability to remember the last time you were warm and ice rinks for pavements. The hardcore Geordies may still be walking around in short sleeved shirts but for most of us not used to braving arctic climates, it's not the best time of year.

In my two and a half years at Uni I've noticed a strange pattern developing. In September we all come back to Newcastle full of the joys of summer, dusting off our drinking boots, delighted by the fact that the horrible summer job is over and that the bank account is surprisingly healthy, and we dive back into the routine of hangover

after hangover after hangover with Christmas to look forward to. Exams are at the back of all our minds and get pushed further back into the recesses of our battle scarred brains by the introduction of copious amounts of alcohol. However, after the excesses of Christmas and New Year, coming back to Newcastle in January is like coming back down to earth with a thump. Exams become the focus of our existence and after we come out of the week of 24/7 revision and the permanent caffeine high has worn off, we see that there's a big hole where our overdraft used to be and that the loan cheque doesn't even begin to cover it. We're behind on rent and

spend consecutive weekends with only 50p to our names. If you combine this with the kind of temperatures that will freeze any internal fluids, it doesn't necessarily produce a town full of happy students.

The second term has become the time of year that can cause, dare we say it, schizophrenic tendencies, in the calmest of students, sliding up and down on an infinite scale of good and bad humour. It seems that this only gets worse as the term continues and that these mood swings are generally perpetuated by other people. I know tonnes of people who started having huge arguments with their housemates, people moving out, friendships

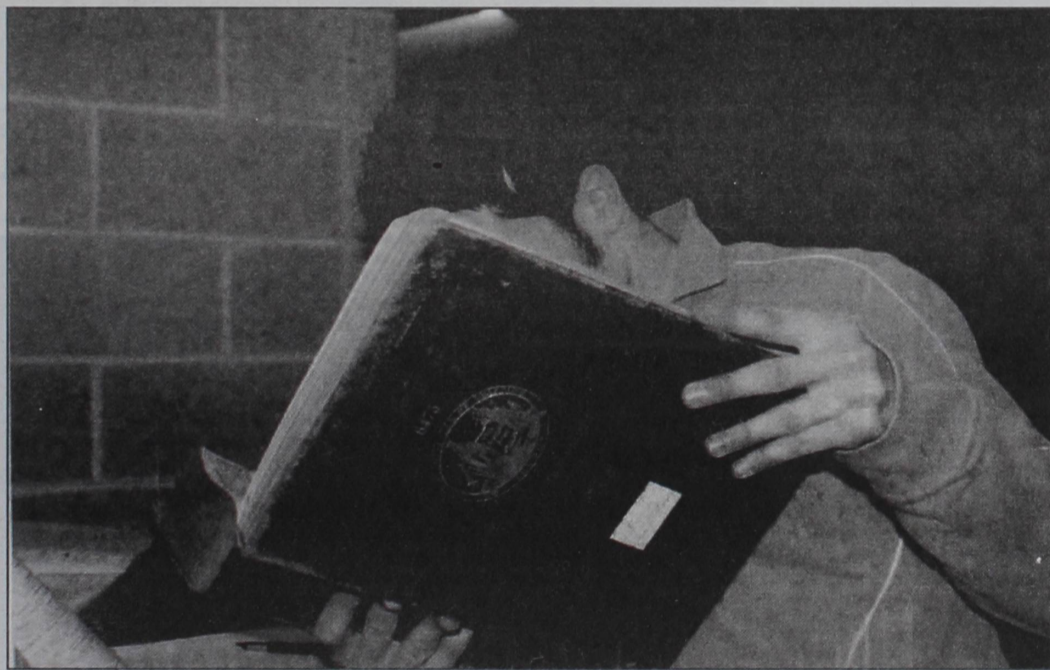


ending abruptly, bitchiness and conspiracies and I have to admit even my boyfriend saying I looked "pretty" once nearly brought me to tears. Nights out become a lottery of emotions. You either become ecstatic or depressed or perhaps both simultaneously. On two nights you could drink exactly the same amount but on one night feel so sober you wanted to go home and on the other be slumped in a corner mumbling inarticulately, trying so hard to get a grip on life itself.

So why does this happen?! Is there something in the wintry Newcastle water that affects the emotional side of every student's brain, leaving us to wait till the pipes thaw out to regain sanity? Well that's just being silly now, because there are loads of logical explanations for the semester two blues: you have no money, it's too cold to face getting out of bed to go to lectures (well that can be your excuse for this month anyway!), let

alone facing the prospect of an overcrowded library to revise for the dreaded post-Christmas exams. And as if this isn't enough already, the chances of falling on your arse in front of the one and only person you fancy in the whole of Newcastle are infinitely increased due to the inhumane icy conditions we are forced to endure in the winter months (and there are far too many of them up here!).

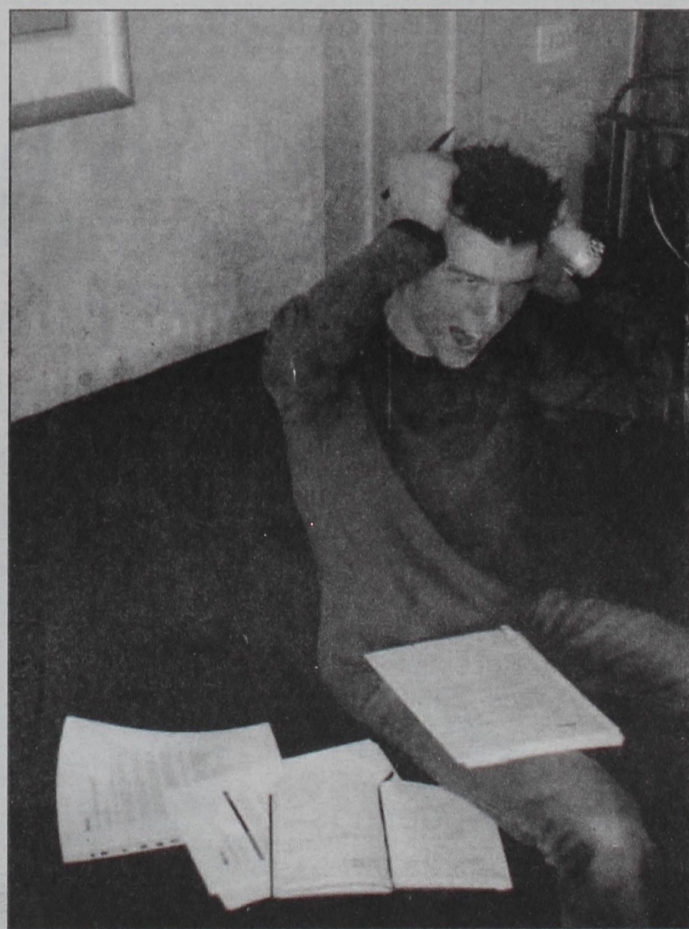
So, if any of these situations sound all too familiar to you, you're probably a sufferer of the semester two blues. But before you carry yourself off to hibernation, never to surface until it's at least 20 degrees outside, and money has begun to grow on trees, hang in there because it won't be long till the birds are singing, the trees are blooming and we'll be drinking away our worries like the true students we are.



Safety Week
14/2/03- 18/2/03

Personal safety is something really important and yet also something that we probably don't think about as much as we should. To try and combat this, this week will be packed full of activities, freebies and tips on how to

be safe. Watch out especially for the police surgery on Wednesday afternoon, the free safety alarms and the stall outside with loads of useful information. You need to be extra careful whilst drinking in the Union- make sure your drink doesn't get "spiked" (or should that be swizzled?) The week will also be promoting the safety bus- a brilliant and cheap way of getting home! And just one last thing- keep an eye out for the "Fear-fighters". You have been warned!



What do Union Officers do?

As elections approach, we ask Union Officers to explain in their own words exactly what they do. If you're interested then read on...

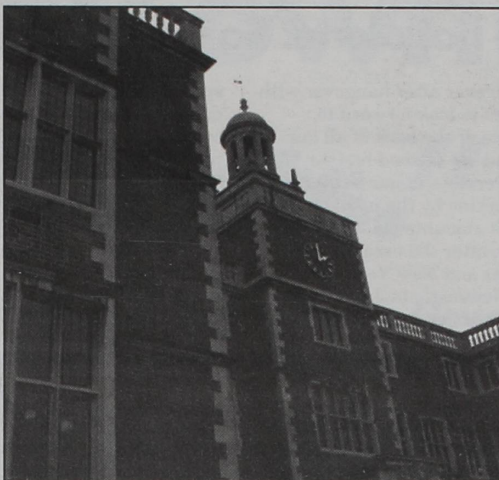
Welfare Officer

Welfare traditionally conjures up images of cardie-wearing, herbal-tea drinking, new-age Mary Poppins' types handing out tissues and patting people on the back. However, representing the needs of 16 000 students to bodies from the University to the Student Loans Company can be a tough job.

Aspects of student life are not easy (finance and housing to name a few), but this role really gives you a chance to improve things for all students through the work you do. In addition to this, the Welfare Officer carries a great deal of responsibility making it fantastic experience. To start with, as line

manager of the SAC you are plunged immediately into a senior management role, being called upon to make important decisions on this key Union service. You also oversee a budget of over £28,000.

If this all sounds a bit like hard work, then you probably won't even make it past the elections, but if this does sound like your cup of tea then there are aspects of the job which are great fun. Some of these include; organising 4 coach loads of people to go down to London and protest against top-up fees (fun but not successful!), working with Viz artists to design a crime prevention campaign and getting to order thousands of condoms in which ever flavour you choose! If you are looking for a job that will give you as much back as you put into it, look no further than the Welfare Officer.



BY LAURA HOLBECK

Communications Officer

Having seen last years Sabbatical Officers having a fantastic time getting involved in all the events that take place in the Union Society; running around wearing bras for Breast and Test Week, abseiling off of the Robinson Library to raise money for the new lift, and getting dragged onto the bus for the Magical Mystery Pub Crawl in RAG Week, I couldn't believe that these officers were actually getting paid for having such an amazing time!?

Since then I have realised that this ability to get involved, and make a fool of your self, is in fact a very important part of the running of the Union. However it is only a tenth of the responsibility you take on as a Sabbatical Officer.

Student representation is at the heart of all officers' work. However this job also offers you an amazing opportunity to develop skills to a level not expected of a recent graduate. As a member of Executive Committee you are responsible for the general management and control of the business of the Union Society and the management of its premises and employees. 4 out of 6 Sabbatical Officers also line-manage members of the permanent Management Team.

Each Officer then has an individual work remit to fulfil in their year. As Communications Officer a large part of this is PR, along with organisation of the Graduation Ball, production of the Annual Report and Alternative Prospectus, and input into the Union Society e-newsletter and website.

Being a Sabbatical Officer is no easy ride, but is definitely worth the energy!!

By LOUISE NEEDHAM

Societies Officers

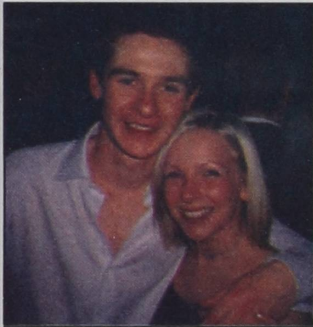
It has been a busy time since we stood outside the Union campaigning in the freezing cold and rain 11 months ago - thanks to all those that voted for us!

So far we've dished out £34,000 of grants to Societies, attended millions of meetings and had so much fun with the other

officers - and we are still not done.

We hold open surgeries for advice twice a week and we are the key communication link between the Union and Societies. This has given us the opportunity to meet lots of new students.

It can be very demanding at times, but also very rewarding - we have learnt so much about how the Union works and picked up various skills ranging from time-management to the CV favourite "Teamwork".



On top of all of that there are a few additional perks - Free entry to Freshers' & Rag week and of course two free cups of tea/coffee/half pint of soft drink per day.

Thanks to all the other officers for making this year such a good laugh!

BY CATHERINE STREET
And OLLIE CAMPBELL

Campaigns Officers

After a tiring, wet and mad week last March, we found ourselves with the job of organising all the campaigns that were going to be in the Union from September. It was more than a little daunting!

Our training started a few days before FYC and was intense but told us a lot about the Union and how it works. Then we got thrown in at the deep end- it was nearly the end

of September and we needed to come up with at least two campaign ideas before Christmas. Because there are two of us, it's easy to share ideas and brainstorm but there is the ever trusty Welfare and Campaigns Committee (one of four we sit on) to throw new ideas at us.

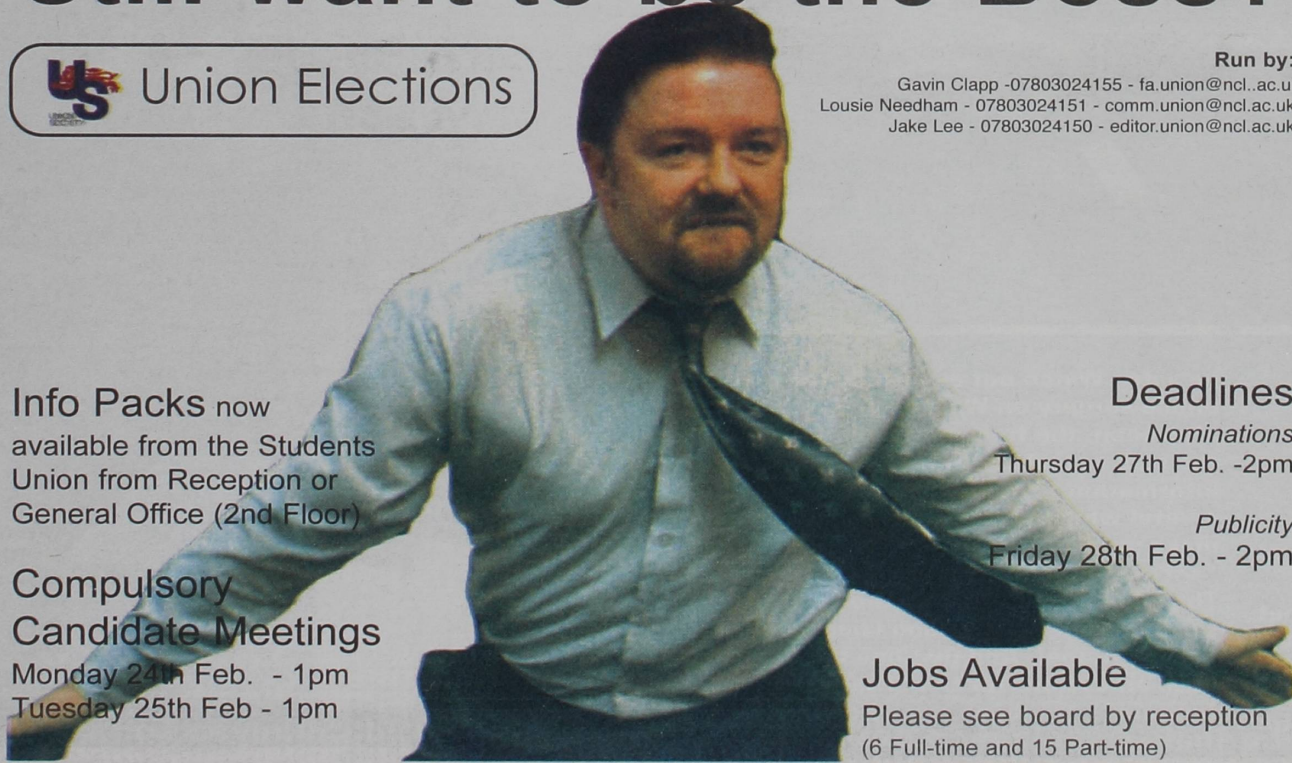
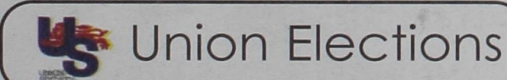
Before a campaign, we have loads of planning sessions with the other officers that are involved in the campaign, design the publicity, beg for money and prizes and generally come up with any ideas we think will help the campaign go well and catch people's interest.

If someone asked me if they should run for the job of

campaigns officer, I'd tell them straight away to do it, but you need to be prepared for the all the work involved in organising and running a campaign and you need to get used to being on committees very quickly. Saying that, we have both had loads of fun, been given loads of opportunities and have met and worked with a bunch of fab people.

By FIONA MOFFAT
AND TOM GORMAN

Still want to be the Boss?



Info Packs now available from the Students Union from Reception or General Office (2nd Floor)

Compulsory Candidate Meetings
Monday 24th Feb. - 1pm
Tuesday 25th Feb - 1pm

Deadlines

Nominations
Thursday 27th Feb. -2pm

Publicity
Friday 28th Feb. - 2pm

Jobs Available

Please see board by reception
(6 Full-time and 15 Part-time)

Officer Positions Vacant for 2003/2004

SABBATICAL POSITIONS

Communications Officer
Welfare Officer
Finance & Admin Officer
Athletic Officer
Editor of The Courier
Education Officer

PART-TIME OFFICERS

Anti-Racism Officer
Campaigns Officer
LGB Officer
Societies Officer
Students with Disabilities Officer
Women's Officer
International Student's Officer
Charities Officer
Executive Officer
PGMS
Chair of Union Council
Convenor of Disciplinary

the THONG

Volume 01 Issue 03

Almost Everything Exposed

24 Feb - 02 Mar 2003

IN BRIEFS

Bin Laden Spotted In Starbucks

Osama Bin Laden was spotted enjoying a Grande Mochaccino in Starbucks on Grainger Street according to latest intelligence from a student essay.

He was overheard saying how much he like Newcastle, and wished the city's bid for Capital of Culture every success.

Too Busy To Chew Gum?

Confectionery manufacturers have launched new range breath-freshening mints for people too busy to chew gum.

The clear, rectangular, plastic-like mints are designed to dissolve on the roof of the mouth, allowing people to get on with their day-to-day business undistracted.

Rowing Is For Life, Not Just For Xmas

The University Boat Club has issued a statement reminding its members of the lifetime commitment they made when they joined.

Some novice members thought they could leave after the Christmas holidays, the President said.

"Rowing is a lifestyle choice. The hours we put in now will be medals we collect come summer."

How Dare You Think For Yourself, Even I Don't Do That

George W. Bush sparked a major diplomatic dispute with France last week, by claiming different work practices give the French Premiere an unfair political advantage.

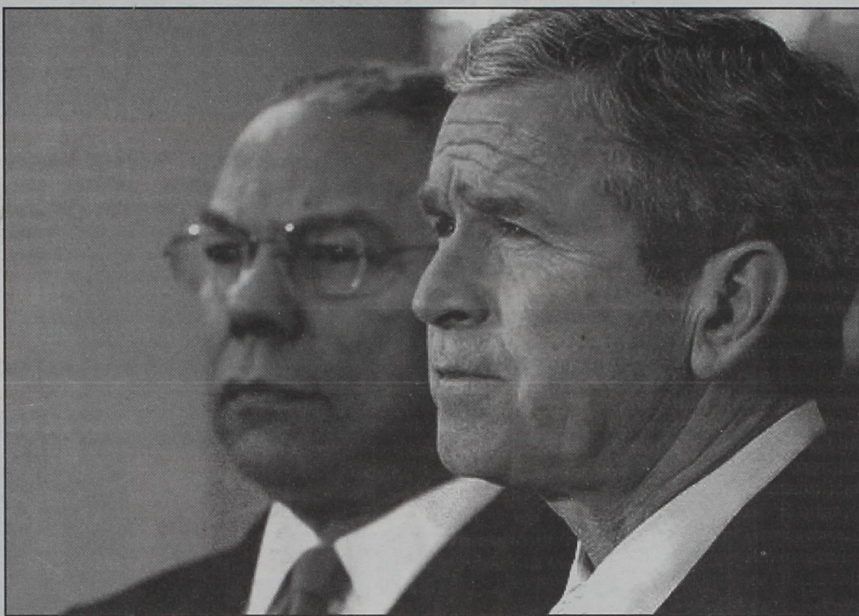
The American President said Jacques Chirac unfairly gained political capital by thinking for himself.

"It's not fair," Bush said. "There should be one rule for everybody. I don't think for myself - why should he?"

"If it wasn't for us, they'd all be speaking French," he added.

His remarks followed news that France would continue to oppose US plans for an invasion of Iraq.

Meanwhile Bush has continued to do as he is told by his advisors.



CLOSE TO TEARS: President Bush with Secretary of State Colin Powell

Congestion Charges In Blu Bambu

By Christina Bracewell-Milnes
Thong Correspondent

Following the success of congestion charges in London, Ultimate Leisure has revealed similar plans to ease overcrowding on the dance floor in its three-storey Bigg Market nightclub, Blu Bambu.

Patrons wishing to access the central dance floor on the lower level during weekday peak hours (10p.m. to 1:30a.m.) will be subject to a two-pound charge.

A spokesperson for Blu Bambu said action has to be taken to ease congestion around these areas. He said the money raised from the scheme will be used to expand the cloakroom and buy more decent clothes for the staff.

To escape the charge, patrons will be encouraged to arrive before the 10p.m. deadline and not to leave until after it finished.

Opponents of the scheme have accused the club of exploiting students already on a tight budget, and merely shifting congestion to the outer areas of the bars.

Nick Habbington, a first year student from Newcastle College is outraged.

"Gridlock on the dance floor is no joke," Mr Habbington said, "but having to pay an extra £2 a night in congestion fees will be a serious drain on my finances."

Management will rely on CCTV to enforce the scheme, photographing those approaching the dance floor. There will be heavy penalties for those who have not paid by 2am when the club closes.

Congestion charges can be paid by putting credit on your smart card in top-up machines situated around the club, in local newsagents and in the Robinson Library.

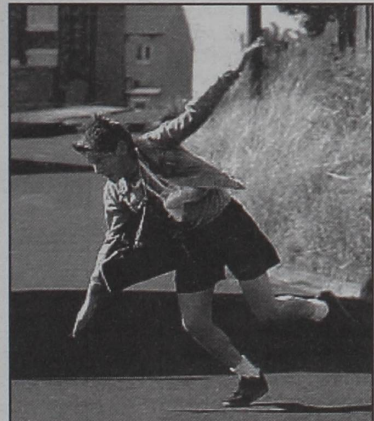
If the scheme is a success, Ultimate Leisure say they will be keen to introduce it to other busy Newcastle night spots.

Anti-Globalisation Protesters Unite Worldwide



THE PEOPLE UNITE: Peace Marchers Demonstrate On Piccadilly

Upset Yank Tourist Can't Find Billy Elliot Dancing In Back Alleys



DURHAM'S DANCER: Billy Elliot

By Jerome Starkey
Thong Correspondent

An American woman expressed her dismay yesterday after searching County Durham's back alleys in vain for Billy Elliot.

Shirley Weston, from Cosmopolitan, Alabama, searched back alleys in the region for three days last week, before deciding that Elliot must have moved elsewhere.

She said meeting Elliot was one of the reasons she had visited the area.

"Normally I don't like going places [where] I can't speak the language," Miss Weston said.

"It's a shame I wasted so much time lookin' for him - maybe I could've gone to a few more countries."

"But it's OK, 'cos I met a chick in Edinburgh who said she'd made out with Prince William - ain't that great! I just can't wait to tell folks back home!"

Miss Weston is on a three-week tour of Europe.

"Inga-land's the tenth country I've been to in as many days - I've been abroad a week," she said.

The Newcastle-Gateshead tourism board has refused to comment in detail on Miss Weston's case, but said that she is not the first American tourist to be similarly disappointed.

The massive turnout of protesters, all over the world, at last weeks peace rallies, has been attributed to new harmony between international pressure groups.

Organisers of the London march said in the *Guardian* that the anti-globalisation movement had joined forces with the international peace movement to protest against conflict in Iraq.

Over 1 million people marched in London, although newspaper reports varied from 500,000 in the always liberal *Daily Telegraph* to 2 million in the conservative *Daily Mirror*.

New JRA Security Alert On Newcastle Metro

By Al Smith
Thong Correspondent

Students in Jesmond were surprised at the sight of two Scimitar tanks parked outside the Lonsdale. The armoured personnel carriers, supported by over fifty infantry troops, were part of a force defending the station from possible JRA attack.

The Jesmond Residents Association are a well known militant anti-student organisation, who claim territorial rights to the Osborne Road area. They recently declared a Jihad or "holy war" on local students.

So far the JRA have limited

themselves to minor vandalism such as tearing down Ikon posters, but a recent escalation has seen leafleting campaigns and even confrontation in the streets.

The armed forces were called in to defend the area after intelligence sources unveiled a plot to derail trains full of pink-scarf-wearing students.

A No. 10 spokesman said: "This is an ongoing operation in relation to a specific threat. The threat is real and the response to it will go up and down accordingly."

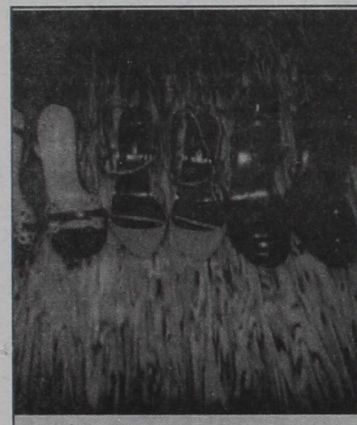
Local students seem unperturbed. One such undergraduate, Tara, a third year politics student said: "It makes me feel safe seeing the troops stood on the bridge and mortars where the taxis usually are."

Everyone say your writing stinks? Apply for a position at the THONG! e-mail j.d.starkey@ncl.ac.uk

LONDON...PARIS...NEWCASTLE...MILAN



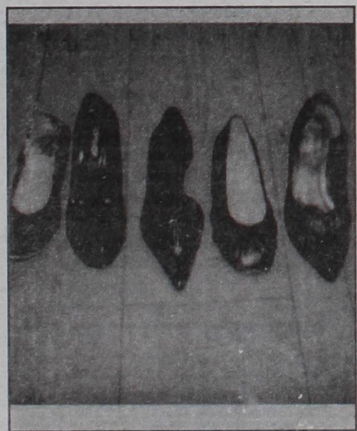
£45



\$45, £35, £45



£45

£25, £45, £45,
£55, £50

High Heels given the treatment

It's shoe crazy, as we look into buying the perfect shoe for nighttime from our favourite highstreet retailer - TOPSHOP

By POLLY SWEET

As a general rule I refuse to attend any event which falls under the heading of "Old Girls' Reunion".

The thought of having to sacrifice one afternoon a year, usually on a Friday during rush hour, to drive to Surrey and have tea with people I have deliberately lost touch with fills me with such dread and anxiety that I find myself having to turn around again at junction 12 of the M25. Even worse are the BringYourOwnBottle evenings for seven which are laden with nostalgia and microwaveable lasagne - it is an inevitable disaster that, at some point, a crackly, taped version of the Leaver's Ball is regurgitated, a cue for everyone to start reminiscing their past loves and life before oral contraceptives. Somehow I find myself dialling Radio Taxis as the milk in my coffee begins to curdle....

Having politely declined all-but-two offers since 1998, last year I thought I ought to make an effort and at least be seen to be trying to reconcile myself to the idea of "school friendships". Fearing deadly boredom, or even possible humiliating isolation (what if no one remembered me?), an itinerary with my times and locations was scrupulously planned and stuck to my fridge three weeks prior to D-day - 8.30pm taxi to their house. 9.30pm taxi back to my house. Three bottles of Chablis were bought as comfort for the hour between arrival and departure.

Somehow though, the hour turned into four. The deal that I thought I had struck up with God had clearly gone to pot as I found myself wedged between my old Biology teacher and the Head of Classical Studies discussing the origin of Latin plant names. Somewhere between my fourteenth "Hail Mary" and my ninth glass of wine however, I was amazed to discover that the teachers who gaited me for smoking, chastised me for drinking and omitted me from every Prize Winning list between 1994 and 1998 are actually not lesbians/transvestites/hermaphrodites but interesting people with genuine affection, hell, a sense of humour and a tendency to get drunk on half a champagne flute. The age old saying "Never judge a book by its cover" might not be entirely wrong after all...

And so I was reminded when, three days later, I was invited to look at Topshop's new range of shoes. Sleek, chic and screaming sex-appeal, these latest additions to Topshop's ever-growing

empire had me moaning with pleasure. Designed by Olivia Morris, a Wimbledon Fashion graduate, and Sophia Kokosalaki the newest protégée of the fashion-savvy, these "shoes" (the word "shoes" is to these what "eggs" is to caviar but anyway....) combine Vintage with 21st century. Kokosalaki has drawn on her native Greek roots to produce some of the most stunning sling-backs since Prada's ribbon-ties - fuschia pink or turquoise leather straps wind up knee-wards whilst vertigo-inducing heels place the emphasis on length (I have no problem with looking like I have 38 inch legs.) Morris has retained her signature style-quirky touches such as tattoo designs and pierced edges have earned her the title of "UK's hottest new shoe designer". Her latest invention, the "paint by numbers" flats sold with miniature brush and paints, are waiting politely in the wings before they make their debut performance this summer. Most becoming of the lot this season were the Stiletto heels in Cerise, enough to baffle even SJP's Carrie Bradshaw, and the red patent leather Minnie Mouse shoes complete with open toe and bow. Despite the fact that they are sky-high liabilities, they are so obscenely sexy you'll never want to take them off. But surely such naughty indulgences come at a high price? They'll make you feel like they're Manolos, and they look like Ginas, but, in a twist of gob-smacking fate, they barely reach the £50 mark.

As though shoe-Nirvana had not yet been reached, Topshop has, in addition, struck up a deal with Voice, the female-orientated trainer designers, who have agreed to create limited editions of Nikes, Asics, Dunlops and Acupunctures for those of us who prefer Trainers to Scrapers. Again the emphasis will be on blending retro and moderno so you can own a pair of the ultimate old skool shoes without bankrupting yourself in the process.

And so next week I shall be seemingly spending a small fortune on shoes when really I shall barely be dipping into my overdraft, and the week after that I shall be planning this year's Old Girls Reunion (I am now self-appointed Hostess, Sheperd's pie Creator and Wine-Provider Extraordinaire.) A moral can be drawn from this tale - Books, Teachers and Shoes should never be judged lightly. Despite the fact that they all tend to get trampled on, discarded (in both a metaphorical and realistic sense) and have a tendency to get worn out fairly quickly, they are actually priceless bijoux who can, ultimately, make all the difference at a dinner party and provide you with hours of unabashed entertainment.



£45



£45



£50



£45

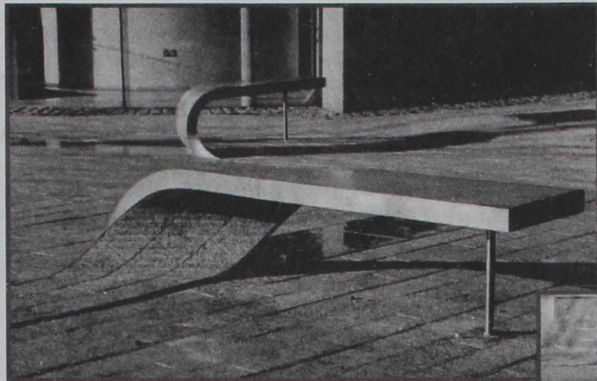
Take a closer look...

AS THE cultural side of Newcastle continues to grow, 'Art' has left the likes of the Baltic behind and hit the city streets.

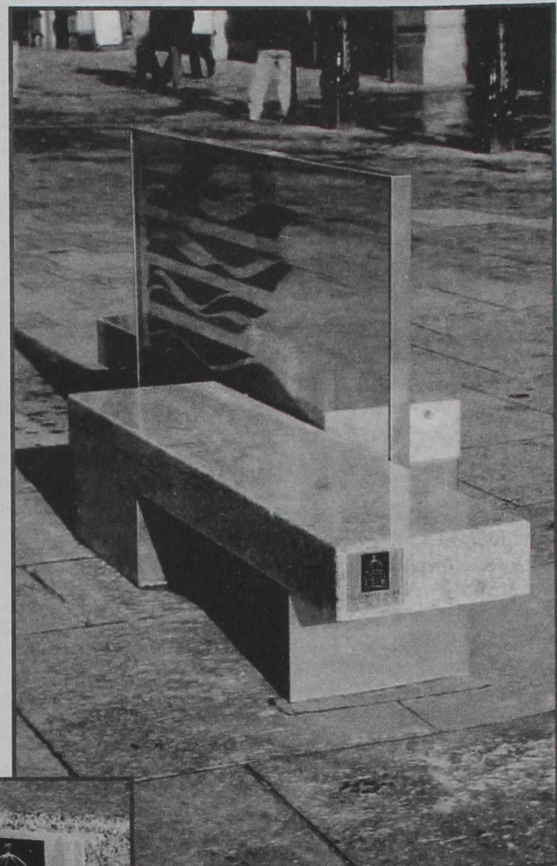
Walking around the centre of the city it is becoming more and more apparent that Newcastle is looking to take on a contemporary edge. As the 2008 City of Culture award draws ever closer, the visual aspect of the city's core is dramatically changing.

Since the unveiling of the Blue Carpet last year, Art has become ever more present in the 'day to day' vision of the city. The artistic thought that has gone into even the most basic of local amenities; into everything from the pavement upon which we walk, to the benches upon which we sit, the streets of Newcastle and Gateshead are looking to the future...

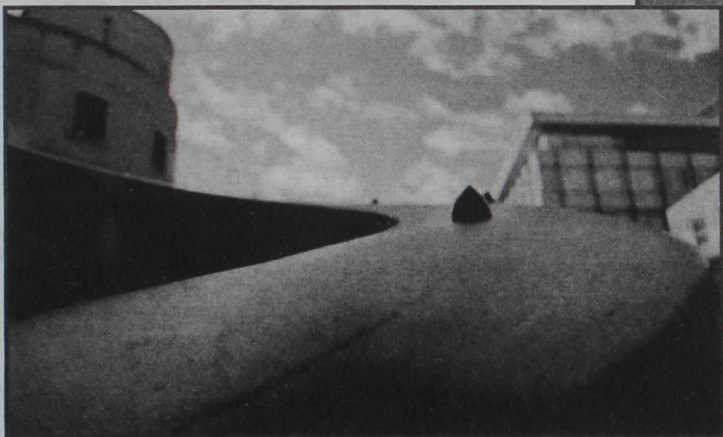
JESS GOOCH
PICTURES BY JAMES SWANN



the blue carpet...



grey street seats...

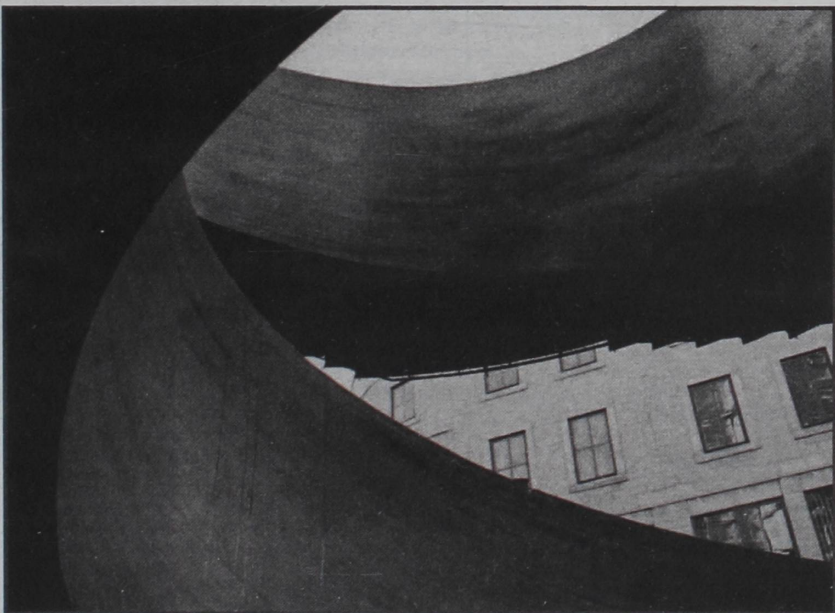


the spiral staircase...

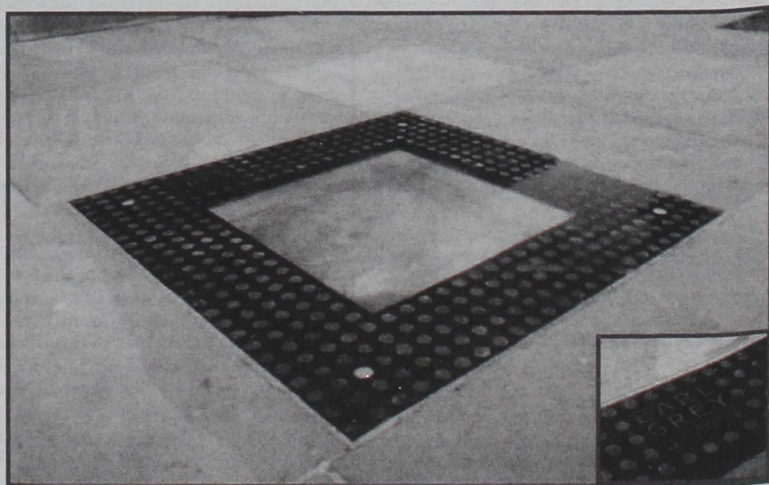
...the
art



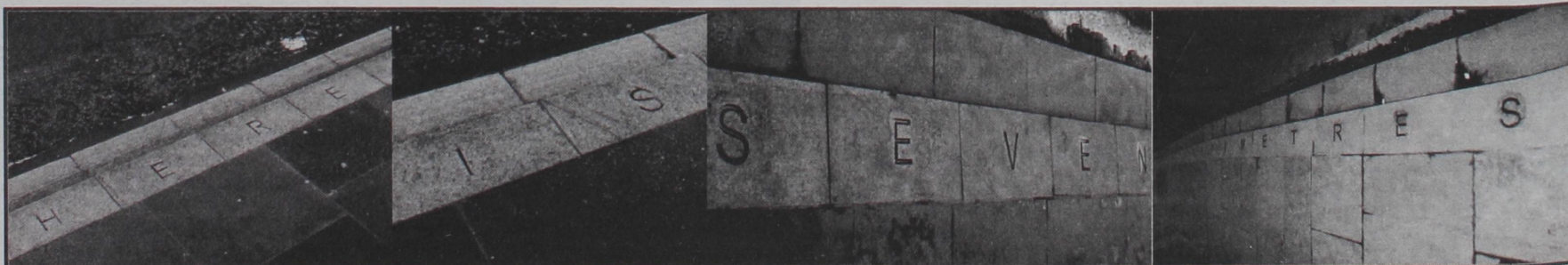
on
the streets...



earl grey in lights...



WORDS ON THE KERB... The pavement by central station gets a artistic face lift.



REVIEWS

Cinema

UNDERCOVER BROTHER

WE WERE ultimately surprised to come out of *Undercover Brother* smiling, saying how awful it was, how we wouldn't see it again, yet strangely continuing to laugh as we remembered the jokes. From the very thin plot of the Black community's struggle under the secret force of the B.R.O.T.H.E.R.H.O.O.D., spearheaded by *Undercover Brother* (Eddie Griffin), to reassert African-American culture into society, which is being undermined by 'The Man', basically Middle America, the film should be racist but somehow isn't, probably because there is no deeper level whatsoever, there is no moral ending, it is as stupidly superficial as you can get without actually becoming annoying like *Scary Movie*.

'The Man' aims to prevent the most legitimate black candidate from running for the White House, a war hero General Boutwell (Billy Dee Williams), by brain-washing him and making him the head of a fried chicken chain. There is basically a single joke throughout the whole film, of satirising white and black culture in America, and the amazing part is that on the whole the film is mostly enjoyable. Yet this needs jokes to keep the film going and often it is just doesn't hit the mark. When *Undercover Brother* gets close to discovering the mystery, 'The Man' sends in White She-Devil (Denise Richards), making even this righteous man of soul start to shop in Gap, sing karaoke, and listen to Michael Bolton's easy listening version of 'The Thong Song'. Mostly the racial stereotypes cover hair and clothes, but when the film trades in the satire for stupid laugh, including the apparent white obsession with mayonnaise, it just becomes boring. The film is definitely a no-brainer on a hungover afternoon, which doesn't really stand up to review, but if you leave your brain behind, like the director did, and don't take it seriously then there are some laughs in this thankfully short film.

WILL WALSH & SARAH BENNETT

HOT FLICKS RATING:



THE RING

Fans of the critically-acclaimed Japanese hit, "Ringu", will be intrigued to see Hollywood's take on Hideo Nakata's 1998 horror: especially when they learn that the man in charge is none other than 'Mousehunt' director, Gore Verbinski.

Re-makes are often criticised for never quite capturing the magic of the original. However, to accuse "The Ring" of this would be unfair. Verbinski takes advantage of his budget by using striking visual effects whilst not detracting from the psychological tricks of the low-budget original.

When four teenagers mysteriously die, it is left to journalist Rachel Keller (Naomi Watts) to solve the mystery. Rumours of a cursed video lead Keller to an isolated cabin, where she is overcome by curiosity, and finds herself watching the tape. After the images unfold in front of her eyes, Rachel learns her fate: she will die in seven days. Each image on the video contains a clue to the source, and as Rachel and her ex-boyfriend Noah (Martin Henderson) get closer to understanding the 'ring', the tension increases. What follows is a desperate countdown as they attempt to beat the clock by discovering the core of the evil, only to find themselves increasingly surrounded by an omnipresent force.

"The Ring", a success in the US, albeit unexpectedly, grossed \$127 million. So is "The Ring" worthy of its acclaim? Most agree that the answer is yes. Verbinski has avoided the traps of gratuitous gore and violence, instead concentrating on the ability of his cast, classic Hollywood tension, subtle direction and a haunting soundtrack. The cast, including Naomi Watts (Mullholland Drive) hold their own. Perhaps the most notable performance was that of David Dorfman, playing Watts' son. Like many classic Hollywood horror films - 'The Omen', 'Poltergeist', and more recently, 'The Sixth Sense' - the child provides the perfect vehicle to evoke the viewers' emotions.

CLAIRE DEAN & KIRK CALVERT

HOT FLICKS RATING:



DAREDEVIL

COMIC BOOK adaptations have lately become extremely successful in terms of box office draw and, often, in terms of critical praise. It seems that the secret is in combining the extremes of the comic book with the sensibilities of film. Batman made the superhero film viable with a dark, gothic and visually stunning vision that remained faithful to its source. Daredevil's director Mark Steven Johnson has clearly tried to stick to this theory. He achieves a balance between a film which nods knowingly at its source and one which takes itself too seriously.

The film's 15 certificate gives it potential to be darker and grittier than other big commercial films. This is certainly the case in places, but the atmosphere in some scenes seems to jar with others. The opening silhouetted pose of the main character clinging to a gothic spire, for example, doesn't seem to match with the modern, less-stylised skyscrapers as the camera pans around the cityscape. The lack of care taken with the environment, always so important in sci-fi and fantasy films, is a major falling point.

That said, *Daredevil* more than makes up for this with its well choreographed fight sequences. The use of extreme slow motion and wire work to support the actors (a feature which has become commonplace in action films since *The Matrix*) gives a very exciting and stylish look. Of course, this requires a slight suspension of disbelief, but this is what *Daredevil* is all about; two hours of enjoyment where it is possible to turn your brain off for a while.

Many of the performances are worth noting too, with the leads, Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner being merely adequate in their roles. Some of the supporting actors however are great. Colin Farrell is excellent as evil henchman Bullseye whilst Jon Favreau brings much needed comedy to the film.

The romantic chemistry between Affleck as Matt Murdock/ *Daredevil*, and Garner as Elektra is acceptable, but this whole plot is a little time-consuming. This is a superhero hero film which is unusually character driven. Although this is welcome, it does, at times, take away from the visceral thrills which *Daredevil* should be all about.

Daredevil seems to be trying to be a slightly new and different super hero flick. At this it fails. However, it does not fail in being an extremely entertaining and welcome addition to the comic book film genre.

NICK YATES

HOT FLICKS RATING:



THE HOURS

THE HOURS is a story that spans seventy years, and the lives of three, seemingly completely different women. First, a supposedly demented Virginia Woolf, played by Nicole Kidman, in 1920's Richmond. Next, Laura Brown, played by the eternally watchable Julianne Moore, who epitomises the 1950's suburban American housewife. Finally, Meryl Streep completes the pack in 2001, playing Clarissa Vaughan the organiser of her best friend, the prophetic Richard's, party. We as the audience are treated to a day in the life of each of these women, simultaneously, with fascinating results.

Woolf is in the midst of writing her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, whilst Brown is reading it, and Richard has proclaimed Vaughan an actual *Mrs. Dalloway*. Thus unfolds a very human story of how these three women cope with the fact that life has them trapped, unable to break away from either madness, marriage or themselves.

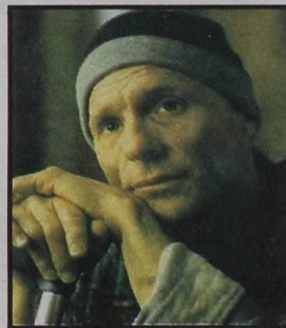
The Hours is the second time Stephen Daldry has been in the director's chair. His last film, *Billy Elliot*, did great box office business, and was a favourite with much of the industry. Whilst *The Hours* has yet to prove itself in the long term, it is eminently better than Daldry's former film, appearing slicker, more accomplished, complex and engaging, with superior acting to boot. Moore is fantastic in her representation of suppressed 50's suburbia, whilst equally mesmerising is Ed Harris' in the film. Oddly, Oscar nominated Kidman comes off as one of the weaker members of the cast, appearing overpowered by the strength of the other leads.

The film benefits still further from the grand, sweeping score presented to accompany these women on their internal struggles with the strengths and shortcomings of their character, so much so that the continual shifting of timeframes appears perfectly natural even from the beginning. Each scene is absorbing, and many are so self contained that the film could have been a theatre production, and this sense of intimacy seems to be Daldry's greatest weapon in communicating the sense of isolation that seems to surround these women.

Some people may find the naturalistic, theatrically inclined pace of the film plodding and slow, and as endearing as the film is, *The Hours* may not deserve to win the Best Picture Oscar, but nevertheless it does deserve an audience.

DANIELLE GIBSON

HOT FLICKS RATING:



live writing

KILLING TIME

by Carina Rodney

@ THE LIVE THEATRE

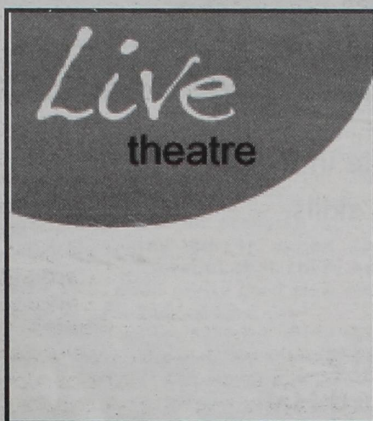
FANCY A bit of light cultural relief? The Live Theatre on the quayside can offer just that. Over the next few weeks the theatre is staging 'Live Writing', a project committed to new writing in association with the BBC's Northern Exposure. 'Live Writing' gives the opportunity for local writers to test the water with their new plays. It sounds like a monotonous night out, actors sat around flat reading from a script to a bored audience, yet it was actually extremely enjoyable.

Not only did we feel as though we were helping the new talent pop the cherries of their scripts, but the actors added interest and this particular script was gripping as well as light. We left having enjoyed the night along with the satisfying feeling that we had

filled our social lives with a bit of culture.

Rodney's play is set in Hungary, and is based in a small complex for people awaiting plastic surgery. The two main characters, Jessica Somerville and Bobby Atkins have to share a bedroom while they await and recover from their operations. The play deals with their boredom, their vanity, and their mutual interest in the local porter, Gustav. The climax of the play takes place when both women sleep with Gustav, and Jessica, in her jealousy reveals Gustav's dark secret, that he performed their surgery. Despite this dark edge to the plot the comic play it was funny and concise. It did not really tackle any of the issues discussed in much depth, but what it did say was interesting and as the reading only lasted an hour there was no time to be bored. It is perhaps not for the great thespians, but for those with a genuine curiosity for contemporary theatre it is worth the trip.

Play reading may seem like a very dull way of passing the time but it proved to be just as entertaining as a full production, granted there are no costumes, movement, or props but the involvement from the actors and the audience is the same. The Live



Theatre is a perfect location for this, its nest like setting on the quayside in a relaxed scattering of quaint tables lit by candles and of course a bar.

If you fancy the chance to experience the Live Theatre for your self then Paul Farrey, a contemporary poet is joined by Katrina Porteous for a poetry reading on the 23rd February at 7.30 pm. Alternatively the new play by Karen Laws, 'Hen Night', is being read on 18th March at 8.00 pm. Entry to both is free and worth the trip if you fancy a change from the TV or the local pub.

AMY HUGHES & KATIE ELLISON

books

THE BIG BUMPER BOOK OF TROY

by W.N.HERBERT (BLOODAXE)

W.N.HERBERT OVER the years has gained a reputation for producing rebellious poetry through Forked Tongue (1992), Cabaret McGonagall (1994), The Laurelude (1998). The Big Bumper Book of Troy not only rebels against traditional forms of poetry but also social, political and economic circumstances, using a range of styles in order to introduce the ancient idea of a Troybook to a modern, popular audience. It sounds great but if like me the only thing you know about Troy is a wooden horse with soldiers in then the idea doesn't take effect straight away.

The original Troybook was written by a Benedictine Monk on the orders of Prince Henry between 1412 and 1420. It is a poem in form but stretches several volumes and attempts to tell the story of the Trojan War. The poem was written in medieval vernacular language - rebelling against traditional Latin verse. It was very popular and influential in the Middle Ages, told the story in a mythological way and attempted through its historical tales to impart a political and moral lesson.

Herbert tries to bring these ideas up to date. The Big Bumper Book of Troy is split into sections which attempt to tell a different part of the Troy jigsaw; Shields, Wandert, Instantinople, The Horse and Troytoon. Each section begins with an introductory quote to get you into the flow. Behind the mask of a very complicated structure what emerges is a selection of poems filled with oodles of critical political commentaries. In a very amusing and mocking poem called 'Spooner Vale' the New Labour government is criticised effectively by using a nursery rhyme-like structure and childlike language to comment on the party's hypocritical right-wing stance: 'So Blony Tair's Lory, all Tabour's blurning tue-Blave Dunkett, Rook, Strack Jaw and Grown- what is a doy to bo?' There are many more gems like this you just get the feeling that you need a map and compass to find them.

Herbert's style is a mixture and much like the poems there are styles to suit all tastes. The poems are written in English or Scottish and many are in dialect which parallels the vernacular style of the ancient Troybook. A strong sense of place comes through poems such as Foot of Scotland and The Farewell to Moscow and Herbert's fervent passion for such places jumps off the page as does his contempt for others through a mischievous and sharp humour.

It is difficult to know whether the Troybook revival will catch on but there is certainly plenty here to dip into and find sections that are relevant to you. The book as a whole is like a giant maze, but as the name Bumper Book suggests it is designed to be more of a compendium of ideas, styles and humour to suit all tastes.



KATIE ELLISON

theatre

THE NUTCRACKER

@THE THEATRE ROYAL

TCHAIKOVSKY'S 110 year old Nutcracker! has been given a facelift by Matthew Bourne, the man responsibly for the World famous production of Swan Lake as featured in Billy Elliot.

Although this cold, Newcastle weather may make it feel like December, it still seems unusual that such a traditionally yuletide tale should be presented in February. The extravagance of the young Clara's dreams is entertaining at any time of year. However, the audience very quickly realise that Bourne's vision of this classic is anything but traditional.

The audience begin to expect an evening of surprises when upon opening their programmes they see not the ubiquitous cheesy mug shots, but a host of adorable childhood photographs. We then see the reason behind it, instead of the Christmas party at the palatial mansion house, the production opens with the adult cast as children in a Dickensian style orphanage. This is an extremely clever device that creates numerous comedic situations and makes

the dream world even more fantastical. However, this also made the second section of the plot in sweetie land rather disturbing because of its slightly suggestive nature. The way the male dancers were posing shirtless was of course entertaining but not exactly matching the innocence of the first scene. One minute these children are happily playing with boxes, the next they are licking their fingers and occasionally each other!

The characters were extremely relatable and identifiable especially because of the slightly more modern and down to earth context. The marshmallow girls, complete with false smiles and cat fights, were more than reminiscent of footballers wives and the Gobstopper boys are present on any street corner on a Friday night. In fact, I couldn't help but think of the black and white Humbug bouncer as part of the toon army! The costuming of this act was particularly excellent, a perfect marriage of the extraordinary and the recognisable. It is very hard to think of ballet as remote and elitist when the lead dancer is wearing a hat shaped liked whipped cream.

The Nutcracker! will be exploding onto the stage of the Theatre Royal until the 22nd February. Although it does not offer the purity and innocence of the original tale, the victory of the poor, mistreated orphans is both exciting and beautiful. It offers a fascinating reworking of an old favourite for the seasoned ballet goer and a witty, dazzling insight into a child's fantasy for those for whom ballet will be a new experience.

CHARLOTTE EDGE

film event

DROWNED OUT & CELTIC ENEMY

@ THE SIDE CINEMA

THE DOCUMENTARIES in this double bill take place on different continents but share common themes. Showing as part of the Fourth Radical Film Festival, they both celebrate ordinary people

resisting attempts by governments and corporations to claim their land.

Celtic Enemy publicises protests against plans for open cast mine development in South Wales. Beginning by interviewing members of the local community, it highlights how they soon find common cause with eco-warriors who join their campaign. Using video footage of pensioners launching into dignified argument with the police and the spectacular sight of younger activists gymnastically swinging from trees demonstrates how generations were united against a development that would have a detrimental impact upon the environment.

Drowned Out deals with the plight of people in Jalsindhi, central India. It is one of 245 villages that

will be submerged as a consequence of the Narmada dam construction. These indigenous people who have depended upon the land for their livelihood are faced with three choices: accept a place at a resettlement site, take a cash payment that will barely cover the cost of relocating to a city slum, or stay put and drown.

While neither documentary pretends to be a balanced account, Drowned Out does include interviews with an Indian government official. However, a combination of community members, Booker Prize winning novelist Arundhati Roy who has been active in the campaign, and a representative of the World Bank review team which expressed doubts about the project put forward a persuasive case against the dam. It is characterised, despite government claims to the contrary, to be an instance of the interests of the affluent being placed ahead of

those of the poor.

Campaigners followed the Gandhi tradition of non-violent protest using methods such as hunger strikes. Construction was halted for six years pending a judicial review. In a split decision, the judges ruled that the dam could be built but resettlement must occur first.

As the protests in Wales also failed to achieve their objectives, these documentaries could have made for depressing viewing. However, they act as an uplifting testament to the human spirit unbowed before pressure from governments and corporations. Being shown during a week that has seen mass demonstrations against war, they serve as a timely reminder of the value of protest.

ANDREW NEAL

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ALBUMS

CLEARLAKE
Cedars

I think the members of Clearlake obviously didn't get the Scalextric they were hoping for last Christmas, because this is a miserable album. Its not 'good' miserable in the way that you can forgive Radiohead for, and its not 'bad' miserable like every bed wetting nu-metal band out there who you wish would just fuck off.

Its just so boring it makes you want to take a drill and perform a lobotomy on your own head. I'd forgive the bad nursery rhyme lyrics if there was some imaginative music behind it, but there isn't. Lead singer Jason Pegg tries too hard to inject emotion into lyrics that any aspiring 6th form poet would sneer at whilst the music is pompous without having any life to it. It's as though the guitarist simply plays a chord and then goes through the different settings on his guitar pedals. At the end of the day even the most die hard indie fan will struggle to find anything of any interest on this album

Adam Berman

KAVA KAVA
Maui

With an intro that is 30 seconds of one weird note, this album then erupts into 'Don't Stop The Music'. Similar to 'Music Sounds Better With You' by Stardust it's one of those great little tunes that make you wanna shut up and dance. It's an instantly commercial song that is a little bit of a red herring for the rest of the album which is a delicious fusion of organs, bass, breaks and beats. And even though the singer sounds like the ultimate king of cheesy house it only helps to add a party atmosphere to music that is deceptively dark in places. I love dance music that is actually musical, as opposed those who use same loops over and over again, and this album is just that. You feel, like with all the great dance acts (Groove Armada, Massive Attack etc) that it would be fantastic to see them live. With snatches of Motown, soul and even gospel this album is quite simply brilliant.

Adam Berman

APPLIANCE

Are you Earthed?

Appliance are a trio consisting of James Brooks, David Ireland and Michael Parker. Having spent the last few months playing UK dates with both Oceansize and Lupine Howl.

Having already released the uninspiring 'Go Native' from their debut album, Appliance now graced us with an entire album of the same stuff. Their sound is a meeting between the Chemical Brothers with Noel Gallagher and the Stone Roses sound. Using a combination of echoed vocals using simple nonsensical phrases they loop these over

the top of sampled beats and synth-like noises.

Only promise the album has to offer are the instrument tracks such as 'Mountains I' which are quite enjoyable tracks of stuttered drum rhythms over the top of electronic sounds and simple guitar melodies.

Don't rush out to buy this one.

James Perry



BEANS

Tomorrow Right Now

Last year saw the demise of the cult hip-hop collective Anti Pop Consortium, the quartet of three MCs and a producer had put out, over the space of two albums and various minor releases, some of the most breathtaking and groundbreaking music coming out of the ever commercialising hip-hop scene.

This album sees Beans, the ever-chic member of Anti Pop Consortium return with his first solo album, reminding us that each member of Anti Pop Consortium had their own unique styles.

Opening with 'Roar' at criticism of hip-hops pop stars, who lack substance, "You suck to be successful", like much of the album it's built around new age bassy beats. With 'Phreek the Beat' and 'Hot Venom' you have two more straight forward tracks that use a more commercial flavoured edge, but still remain as cutting as innovating as the rest of the album.

And if doubt had set in whether the production would suffer with Beans alone then the instrumental tracks 'Sickle Cell Hysteria' and 'Rosie Periwinkle Plum' remove any doubts, though by this time through the album you should be having no doubts at all. Then we have the far more lo-fi affairs of 'Booga Sugar', a straight out of the coffee shop entirely poetic affair, and the human beat box driven rap of 'Crave'.

Beans is ultimately an intelligent wordsmith who has managed to move away as a solo artist well, 'Tomorrow Right Now' keeps the futuristic sound of Anti Pop Consortium with that stylish swagger that has become part of Beans' style. In all the topics and tempos vary but in all it works as being a great new album, this is a diverse and necessary record to hear just so you can taste raps

tomorrow, right now.

Matt France

CALLA
Televise

This is the third studio album from Brooklyn rockers, Calla, following the last two albums, 'Calla' and 'Scavengers'. Calla have been described as "the number one band to watch" by Alternative Press, so does this album live up to that claim? In a word, yes.

'Televise' has a truly raw and jagged feel to it, best described as a clash of the sounds of Radiohead and Marilyn Manson. Vocalist, Aurelio Valle's voice sounds completely detached adding an often sinister feel to the tracks on this album.

The highlights of this album are the tracks 'Don't Hold Your Breath' and 'Strangler', both of which are dark and yet compelling to the listener. The often gothic and insecure qualities of these songs typify the rest of this album.

Calla themselves have already amassed an impressive following amongst their fellow musical peers, notably Nick Cave & the Badseeds and Godspeed you Black Emperor, who are both reportedly eager to tour with them.

Do not expect this album to be the number one feel-good album of all time, rather an album that takes you into the depth of your own soul on a guided tour of pain. The album has been described as a "lullaby of last breaths", raw and sinister, yet strangely very appealing, definitely worth a listen.

David Marriott



EVERCLEAR

Slow motion Daydream

I have a real affection for this band but haven't been impressed with anything they've done since 'So Much for the Afterglow' was released back in 1997. They used to be a straightforward rock band but the epic orchestral ballads of recent years led me to believe that A.P. Alexakis was tripping more balls than he ever managed as a junky.

Unfortunately Everclear's latest release 'Slow Motion Daydream' hasn't done much to restore my faith in Alexakis but then at least he's not dressing up as a Baptist preacher anymore. There are still a lot of ballads and strings here and the more upbeat songs such as, 'How to Win Friends and Influence People', lack the rawness that used to make

Everclear pretty good.

A more serious and constant downfall for Everclear has been Alexakis, sickening narrative approach towards his lyrics and the story of his "Volvo driving soccer Mom", bares a little resemblance to Avril Lavigne's 'Sk8er Boi'. The lyrics do have the desired effect on occasion and it pains me to make the concession that there are some pretty good slow rock ballads on here.

However the thing that impresses me most about Everclear is the optimism which runs as a constant theme throughout all of their albums. The simple pop of Everclear is reassuring and possibly why I kinda like them.

Paul Kettleborough

HARAMBE
Roots

I was interested to hear this new album by a group described to me as 'soul', even though I was slightly put off by the message on the inside cover stating that the album is, "about being granted the vision to see that you've been following the wrong path". It sounded a bit too preachy to me, but I gave it a go anyway. I wish I could say I was proved wrong, but I wasn't. Although the music wasn't the happy-clappy drivel I was expecting after reading that passage, the lyrics were still very basic and the songs were so similar I thought I had my CD player on repeat. Rather than describing it as 'soul' I think it falls more under the category of boring-funk-with-far-too-much-bass-guitar. Anyway, at least I figured out why no one's heard of them before!

Louise Ovenell

PILOT TO GUNNER

Games at High Speeds

This is the European release of Pilot to Gunner's 2001 album. PTG have aesthetic similarities to bands like Jawbox, Garden Variety or The Promise Ring that are often unfortunately labelled 'emo' and are bound to be linked to that particular scene. This record however has a great deal more depth than most other so called emo releases and stands up on its own as a collection of highly charged and soulful pop songs.

Instrumentally, 'Games at High Speeds' is explosively energetic and the two guitars work together creating intricate patterns and melodies without ever succumbing to the standard one rhythm and one lead format. Lyrically the album is also way above average though the actual vocal part is at times slightly buried in the mix. This is a small gripe to a largely brilliant record which suggests perhaps above all that PTG would be a particularly amazing live experience.

Arin Keeble

SINGLES

BEVERLEY KNIGHT
Shape Of You

This CD contains two versions of Beverley Knight's new single that are so different you won't even be able to recognise that they're the same song: the album version and the remixed hip hop style version written by non other than Wyclef Jean. Personally I think this version is by far the best, with a great beat to dance to and Beverley's excellent vocals. But the reason I like it so much is because it seems she might finally be breaking away from her usual soulful style of music and getting into a more funky dance style, something that I've been waiting for her to do for a long time.

There are plenty of female r'n'b singers around at the moment - Kelly Rowland and Ashanti to name but a few, but British hip-hop talent is still very thin on the ground, despite promising starts from Ms Dynamite and the like. Let's hope she continues to work in this direction.

Louise Ovenell

CHICANE

Love on the Run

With this I was hoping that Chicane may have given up on the desperately mediocre pop dance featuring the fallen idols of pop. This time around instead of going for a vocalist on their way down, Chicane try their hands at making former d:ream vocalist Peter Dinklage their Lazarus.

So how does this resurrection fair, well I'm sorry to say that somewhere along the line the sort of inspiration that brought them chart success with the likes of Saltwater has vanished without trace. Instead they have favoured a less obvious sound, that really doesn't work at all, and unfortunately it just isn't a sound that will catapult Chicane back to the top 40. I've got to admit that merit is due for their attempts to avoid pop overload, but unfortunately it just doesn't have any kick whatsoever.

It looks that Chicane have gone down the same road of their vocalists of choice and gone just as far they can.

Matt France

DIRTY VEGAS
Simple Things

As a self confessed Dirty Vegas virgin I have to say I was pleasantly surprised with their new single

'SimpleThings', especially as they are described as a three piece dance act.

A great little guitar tune with a funny background instrument which sounds suspiciously like that wobble board thing Rolf Harris plays. It works well though!



It's a song that'll have you humming and not a trace of dance (unlike the majority of their album of the same name). Ace.

Dirty Vegas, were originally to be called Dirty Harry but couldn't because - well you clever kids work it out - start their UK tour in March, rudely skipping Newcastle, mind.

Lindsay Clark



DATSUNS

Harmonic Generator

It must feel great to be the "coolest band of the moment" and all, with the lead member being voted the third coolest, man in rock. What! Only the third I hear you cry. (Well there is that drummer from the Strokes now isn't there... silly you). This week the Datsuns return to bestow us with their second single from the self titled album.

Stopping for a moment to wipe away the tears from my eye you stop to think what could they possibly do to make them more of a cooler band? Well they could release a nonsensical single about a "harmonic generator"?! A what?

Exactly! A highly catchy single from a very catchy album which is nothing more than catchy rock riffs. It sounds clichéd but its all been done before, its not the "coolest, thing ever..." its just dumb.

So if you like this samey listen to them and buy NME and one day you too could aspire to be just the coolest, flavour of NME's weekly front cover.

James Perry

INTERVIEW: ED HARCOURT

In the midst of a whirlwind headline tour Ed Harcourt, having released his latest single on Monday, attended a magazine launch on Tuesday and anticipating the release of his second, highly acclaimed album 'From Every Sphere', is without a doubt a Very Busy Man indeed. It's amazing, then, that he was persuaded to take time-out from his hectic schedule to offer a few words of wisdom and hypothetical musings to The Courier. Speaking in the glamorous surroundings of the dressing rooms at Northumbria University's Second Stage, here's what the be-suited Mr Harcourt, resplendent in chunky-knit oversized blue beanie hat, had to say...

So, how's the tour been so far?

Yeah, it was weird, I actually came up on the train today from London, and was thinking I'm really, really happy.

Not the tour bus?

I was down in London yesterday. We played Stoke on Monday then I had to do a magazine launch - Word magazine - kind of like Mojo or Q, that kind of thing. Then I went and bought a new piano - beautiful, art-deco green; went and put it in my room in London, then went bowling with my girlfriend, which was great.

Did you win?

No, I was really bad, but then I had a few strikes, I was still wearing this suit; it was like 'Kingpin'.

Back to the tour, how was Stoke on Monday?

Stoke was great, we were all like, "What are we doing here?" But then we played and there were quite a few people there, it was good. I asked somebody outside, while I was playing, which is a stupid thing to do in Stoke. Luckily I had to leave immediately anyway! (Breaks off to 'playfully' attack his bassist with a broom handle.) I have to keep them in line you know, they need to be disciplined every now and then.

Was playing on Monday any different, considering it was the release date for new single 'All of Your Days Will Be Blessed'?

Oh it was fine. I was like, "Oh by the way, my new single's out today. So buy it." It was OK actually, mid-week it's at number thirty, which is really good, and means I'm probably going to get to do Top of the Pops. But I think it's going to go down, I'm probably the kind of person that people will go out and buy on the first day and then it will just go...

Have there been any 'stand-out' dates so far, in terms of audience reception or venue atmosphere?

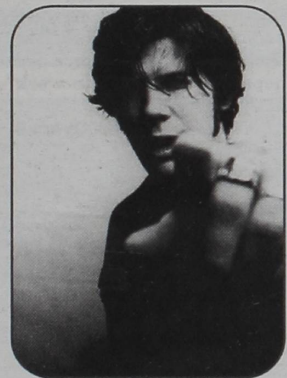
I actually really enjoyed Stoke, and Northampton

was really special for some reason. I had no idea what it was going to be like, and the crowd were just going mental. There were all these people, they were all on E, and they were crying and, like, hugging me. Sheffield was very funny, a lot of heckling and banter between me and the audience.

Going back to last year, how did you find Glastonbury? You didn't take time-out from his hectic schedule to offer a few words of wisdom and hypothetical musings to The Courier. Speaking in the glamorous surroundings of the dressing rooms at Northumbria University's Second Stage, here's what the be-suited Mr Harcourt, resplendent in chunky-knit oversized blue beanie hat, had to say...

It was great, it was insane. I was a bad boy that day. I had to go to Belgium afterwards, but I met my hero, Mark Lonagan, from Queens of the Stone Age. He's like, seven feet tall and looks like the devil. I was just going "You're amazing". And then we went to the Belgium festival, it was fucking brilliant, there was a courtyard of dressing rooms with everyone standing round. I was doing an interview for MTV Holland and Dave Grohl comes up behind me and starts throwing beer on me. I started having a beer fight, with Dave Grohl, from the Foo Fighters! (Ed's phone rings - it's his manager.)

Hey, we've got album of the month in Uncut!



Moving onto the new album 'From Every Sphere' is it a more personal and emotional album than 'Here Be Monsters'?

Yeah, I thought I was going to make an album that was going to be kind of weird and strange, a dark album about ghosts and dreams, things like that. But it didn't turn out to be like that, it turned out to be a heartbreak album, half of it is a heartbreak album about a relationship that's just dying and there's nothing you can do about it. Last year at Glastonbury I was in the middle of a massive bender, non-stop drinking, didn't give a shit about anything. I'd just split up with my girlfriend of five years, and then my grandmother died, and then I split up with someone again. I was just like, "I don't give a fuck". But now I'm really happy, and on top of things. But you've got to have a year like that, to know what you want, I suppose.

So working on the new album with (Tom Waits

producer) Tchad Blake, how did you find that?

It was great, he's really charismatic, very nice, and sonically a genius - recording and all the technical stuff - but he's just, really cool.

You're often likened to Tom Waits...

I suppose I get compared to a lot of people, which maybe means it's quite original!

How concerned are you about the commercial success of the album?

I guess there's a part of me that hates the whole 'indier than thou' mentality, but I do want to do well. I don't always want to see my name in print, or on my gravestone "Ed Harcourt, one of the most underrated cult artists ever known to man". I don't want that, I do want to be...but I think I'd like to subvert modern pop music, I wouldn't want to sell my soul... completely.

What about the success of the single?

I don't buy singles. I see them as little advertisements for the album, so any that you sell are just a bonus. I don't care, my single starts with a harmonium. A harmonium!

Who would you tip as "ones to watch" for this year?

I know NME have been talking about them, but I really think The Sleepy Jackson are good. I hope 'Bright Eyes' does well, I'd really like him to be massive, he's a genius. I really like 'The Beatles', they could do quite well, they're this band from Liverpool.

Hmm, think I've heard some of their stuff.

Yeah, they're meant to be really good! Actually, there's this girl called Regina Spector, she's really good too.

From where did you draw your inspiration for the new songs?

Definitely dreams: waking up in the middle of the night and not knowing whether you're in a dream or reality; fevers and relationship problems, your own experiences. And then... death, love and death equally, and beauty and violence, like in (album track) 'Watching the Sun Come Up'. That's what I've been obsessed with, like I think it was Jeff Buckley who said "I'm an ultra-violent romantic" I definitely understand what he was saying there. So it's just about not doing things by half measures.

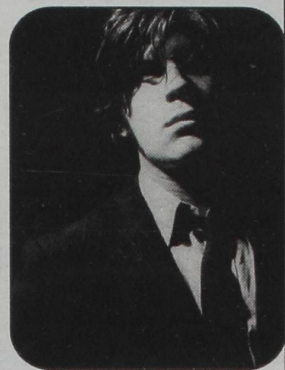
Are the more bizarre, off the wall tracks more allegorical than literal?

A lot of it's quite cryptic, and I don't know why, I don't really look for the hidden depths and meanings within a song. So, I write it and then I step back from it, and say "what's this mean?" About half of the album was written when I was really ill, I had bronchitis for five months and ended up coughing up blood every night, I couldn't sing. So it was all a bit of a mad

experience. I'm really writing a lot at the moment, songs just keep coming out.

For you, then, writing songs must be almost like keeping a diary.

It is, yeah. I do keep a diary, and the innermost, darkest thoughts go into it, 'cause you don't want to give away



too much, otherwise everyone knows everything about you.

What about plans for after the tour - will you finally be having a rest?

No! I get back then have two days before Sweden, then I'm going to Paris to do a Chet Baker TV show, playing with all the musicians who've played for Chet Baker. Then I've got five or six days, then I'm off to America playing with Supergrass, The Coral and The Polyphonic Spree.

How did you find touring with Supergrass, and Beth Orton, on selected UK dates?

Great, yeah, But I didn't like the seated venues at all, they were rubbish. It culminated one night when I was playing and saw this bloke sitting at the front, half asleep and yawning. I was like, "Hey you, what is this - a fucking library?"

Where would you see yourself now, if you weren't doing what you're doing?

I would be a professional cat-burglar/playboy, kind of like the Pink Panther. A playboy by day, with a moustache, and then I'd befriend rich ladies, and steal all their jewels.

Given £1 million to spend in a single day, what would you buy?

I would buy all of the Gareth Gates and Will Young singles, and distribute them to people in the street, and then just as I'd give the CD's out, I'd say "the end of the world is nigh." Just whisper it, dead-pan. "The end of the world is nigh."

Finally, if you could invite any four people, living or dead, for a night down your local, who would it be?

Well, this is easy. Einstein, Kurt Cobain, Jimi Hendrix, and Marlon Brando. Imagine that, at the bar, "Marlon, what do you want?" Or Kurt Cobain saying "I'll have a lemon and lime". Jimi Hendrix - "Hey man, have you got any acid here?" It'd be great.

Interviewed by:
Sally Cook

LIVE REVIEWS

The Delgados@ Northumbria Union, 03/02/03

It was a small yet enthusiastic crowd who gathered at Northumbria Student Union's Stage 2 venue to see The Delgados. Like many others, I had seen them support Doves at the larger upstairs venue in November, and had been impressed. So I was surprised when lead singer Emma Pollock apologized for their performance at the Doves gig, claiming it to be one of their worst gigs ever.

But as soon as the first song 'Light Before We Land' kicked in, I could appreciate what she meant. An epic opener of a song with sweeping strings, and imaginative contrast between hushed vocals and grand harmonies instantly gained the total attention of the crowd. The sheer scale and complexity of their sound was a level above how they had sounded in November, when they had been hindered by the lack of decent monitors onstage, or even a proper soundcheck.

Complemented by a string ensemble, (including a cellist with pink hair, the only negative point of the gig!) flutist, and a pianist, The Delgados gave a stunning performance. Highlight for me was the hauntingly beautiful song

'Child Killers' with its slow build up to an almost anthemic chorus. As their penultimate song they played the yonks old 13 Gliding, with the two main singers Pollock and Alun Woodward almost battling each other, and then joining in union for a savage chorus.

But even if you were unfamiliar with the band, was one of those rare gigs where it didn't matter if you knew the songs or not. The band chatted and joked with the audience throughout the gig, and it seemed as though they were really enjoying the gig, although that might have something to do with large amounts of red wine the band consumed during the gig!

This is what gigs should be like. Too many bands alienate their audience by disappearing to far up their own backsides and taking themselves way too seriously. Along with Mercury Rev and The Flaming Lips, The Delgados are making music that transcends above the now boring and samey indie/rock/punk that is seemingly littering the gig circuit at the moment. It makes a change for a truly original band to grace the venues of Newcastle.

Can we have some more please?

Adam Berman

The Raveonettes@ Newcastle Union, 05/02/03

The Raveonettes show was my first in a while and as always the decision to go was rather problematic. Most gigs involve me suffering some form of molestation and with fears of sore feet, uncomfortable heat, and contamination with Crass loving cider punks, I approached this gig with my usual trepidation.

However my concerns were far outweighed by the positive things I'd heard and read of the Raveonettes and the thought of me ignoring a potentially good garage rock act on my own doorstep was unbearable. This was coupled by the fact that northern rock act Mos Eisley were listed as support and I'd been meaning to check them out.

As things turned out there was no Mos Eisley (unless I was too late) and Nylon Pylon had been added to the bill. Thankfully I arrived at the Union half way through NP's set, as while I found their, synth/rock with a little dub, sound innovative, it was a

bit too 'loco' for my liking. To their credit NP did gain the support of the crowd in the global cafe (a fair turnout) who were a little more receptive to their creativity.

The Raveonettes, on the other hand, drew a mixed response from the fairly positive crowd. They churned out a lot of very short lo-fi garage songs all in the same Bb minor key under their very own ego-banner (Led Zep, you ain't). As you can imagine this was very irritating and the people on stage didn't seem too enthralled about it either.

What must have been no more than half-an-hour felt like an age and all I really remember were the sore feet and spells of dizziness brought on by a rising temperature under my clothes (admittedly my own fault for dressing impractically). Fortunately for me, the only good result for this gig was its early finish and I got to bed by a sensible hour (11.00pm) nursing my wounds with a hot cup of milk in hand.

Paul Kettleborough

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FREE ENTRY

THE UNION QUIZ

THE BEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME?

All the trendy music mags seem to run lists of the greatest albums... ever, that no-one agrees with...ever. So here at The Courier we thought we'd compile our own list of personal favourites for you to argue over. I'd just like to state now for the record that asking a bunch of music critics to list their favourite albums of all time was a bit of an error. Firstly, music writers always want to be subversive and leftfield, so they actively try to pick CDs you probably haven't heard of, secondly when it came to picking my own favourites I couldn't pick Parklife, London Calling or Grace so I reverted to being subversive and leftfield-ish. So here are our choices, in no particular order.



Pulp
Different Class

Whilst Blur and Oasis were having their catfight during the height of Britpop, Pulp quietly released the defining album of the era. Be it the ironic drug empathy of 'Sorted For E's and Whizz', the glam rock of 'Disco 2000' or the anthem 'Common People' this album has it all. Inspired lyrics and great musicianship from a band who had grafted for 15 years showed a maturity that was light years ahead of the 60's rock of Oasis and the public school arrogance of Blur.

AB



The Stone Roses
The Stone Roses

Has there ever been a greater debut album than this? I doubt it. With arguably the best opening three songs in music history ('I Wanna Be Adored', 'She Bangs The Drums' and 'Waterfall') and the closing guitar soaked genius of 'I Am The Resurrection' this album sparked off the whole Indie scene. With the best guitarist of a generation, a bass player who is now a legend in music history, a drummer who treated his skins as a totally independent creative instrument, and a singer who despite lacking the best voice in the world demanded

attention. The Stone Roses, for a brief period had the world at their feet.

AB



Nirvana
Nevermind

The album that acts as your right of passage into the world of rock. Every track on this album is a classic in its own right. "With the lights out, it's less dangerous", come on, sing-along!

DM

Levellers
Levelling the Land

The rock / folk / peace loving / hippies at their very best, arguably! Contains their highest charting single ever, 'Fifteen Years'.

DM



Boards of Canada
Geogaddi

Sepia-tinged psychedelia and child-like lullaby melodies sounds from the Scottish duo. Combining futuristic synths and drifting soundtracks of old education television documentaries. The album gives you a warm melancholy feeling that puts an intriguing spin on the currently over fashionable crap excuses for 'chill-out' sounds. And without sounding too pretentious it is far more intelligent than the obvious artists that are in the same category.

JP

The Manic Street Preachers
The Holy Bible

Ok so the Manics are very much a marmite band but love them or hate them, very few albums can match the articulacy and vitriol of 'The Holy Bible', least of all any of the Manics own other offerings. Taking their musical references from the Clash and their lyrics straight out of The Bell Jar they produce genuinely intelligent rock music. Of course the presence of Richey Edwards, or indeed the lack of it does create a kind of myth surrounding this last studio album he made with the band, his influence is something that today's incarnation of the band clearly lack. 'The Holy Bible' may not be the most easy album to listen but its angry lyrical power and spiky

punk-rock sound marks the pinnacle of the Manics career.

JS

The Ramones
The Ramones

Raw, edgy and cool as fuck, The Ramones debut is one of the best punk releases ever, never mind your nu-punk likes of Blink182 and Sum41, this is real punk at its roots. The New Yorkers showing their British contemporaries how to do it without the obnoxious attitude and that is exactly what marks out this album from others such as the Pistol's offerings - where Johnny Rotten was all swears and spitty, Joey Ramone was the epitome of snarling scowling cool. My friend Victor met Joey and Dee Dee Ramone when he played at Joey's birthday a few years before he died and he told me that even though the former legend was old and ill, his eyes still showed his punk soul, he never lost the spirit and that spirit, the unrefined, pure sound of 1970s New York is what makes this album so damn good.

JS



Jeff Buckley
Grace

Jeff Buckley's 'Grace' has been my favourite album since the first time I heard it about 5 years ago. It's very rare that I regard an album so highly after hearing it only once but this is an extraordinary exception. Buckley's beautiful voice lends itself so perfectly to an incredibly versatile range of songs which include upbeat tracks, such as my personal favourite, 'Last Goodbye', soft love songs, like 'Hallelujah', and even a Benjamin Britten carol. Buckley tragically died before properly completing his second album which only makes 'Grace' more of a classic and a must have in anyone's CD collection.

FN

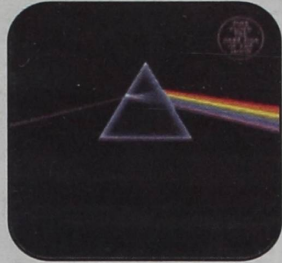


Operation Ivy
Energy

The Op. Ivy boys have done alright considering they've attained legendary status and inspired a wave of Less than Jake bands all on the

back of one record. Of course the real winner is lil' Timmy Armstrong who penned the Op. Ivy classic, 'Bad Town' and made people realise that white kids were suffering in the ghetto too. He may look like he has downs but after selling millions with Rancid and creating a whole new rap/punk genre with the Transplants, there's no doubt that this homeboy is shrewd. The Op. Ivy crew were a revelation in 1989 and 14 years down the line they're still fuckin' shit up.

PK



Pink Floyd
Dark Side of the Moon

Easily my favourite of all their albums, I never get bored of listening to this. The stylistic diversity on this album is amazing, and the vocal on 'The Great Gig in the Sky' still makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Not bad, considering I've been listening to it since I was about three.

SC



Blur
Parklife

Although I don't listen to this nearly as much as I used to, when I was about fourteen or fifteen this was constantly on my ghetto blaster. It defines an entire period of my formative teenage years, but unlike much of the crap I was also listening to then I'm not embarrassed to still own this one, and it's a sure-fire hit if you're having a party.

SC

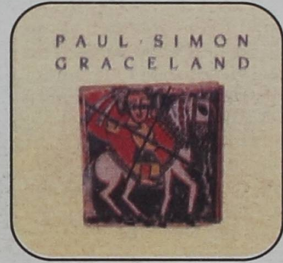


Tori Amos
Little Earthquakes

When I was 16, my guitar teacher handed me scraps of 'Little Earthquakes' on a tape promising me I'd like it. He was wrong. I adored it and in my music listening history, I don't think I've heard anything more beautiful. As with so many

albums, we measure them against how they make us feel and it was like a whole different genre. Tori Amos has released 7 albums to date, but this, her debut is still widely considered her best. Perhaps it's because it consists only of a songwriter and her piano, not much more and certainly nothing less. It haunts and sparkles with simplistic songs written out of her painful and joyful experiences. You wouldn't expect such open sexuality, anger or happiness from a minister's daughter who has been raped and miscarried three times but it's a remarkable audio testament to her will not to remain a victim anymore. Rather than wallowing in self pity, the result was these stunning songs. Chances are everyone will be able to relate to one, what makes it my favourite album is that I can relate to them all.

VB



Paul Simon
Graceland

Ever since I was in the womb, my parents would play Paul Simon at me on long journeys. Now that it no longer makes me feel car sick, I love it. I bought the CD after I wore my Dad's tape out. It emerged from Paul Simon's time spent in Africa and the influences are evident in every single song from the bongo rhythms to the reggae guitar and the voices of Lady Smith Black Mambazo. It reminds me of summertime now (as well as the A1) with its Mardi Gras similarities and bizarre lyrics i.e. 'He makes the sign of the Teaspoon, she makes the sign of the wave' for reasons best known to Paul himself. Hopeful, sentimental, cheery and extraordinary, it never fails to bring a smile to my face.

VB



Underworld
Dubnobasswithmyheadman

Although I only got into this CD a couple of years ago now it has firmly established itself as my favourite album of all time. Many prefer 'Second Toughest in the Infants' but to me nothing comes close to the sheer brilliance of this record. 'Cowgirl' is an absolute

classic, as is 'Dirty Epic', and 'River of Bass' is a superb chill-out track. What's more this album reminds me of driving through the sparse landscape of Ibiza at 3 am, after just arriving on the island. A great memory to match the album.

AS

Jawbreaker
24 Hour Revenge Therapy

Jawbreaker's 24 Hour Revenge Therapy was life changing for me. It has all the anguish and despair one could hope for in a rock record. In my humble opinion its lyrical power has been unrivalled since its release in 1994.

AK



The Clash
London Calling

London Calling is a record that I've repeatedly gone back to over recent years probably because of its astounding diversity; Strummer was so great in that he could handle the trickiest of political themes and also write deeply affecting songs of personal disillusionment like 'Lost in the Supermarket'.

AK



Wilco
Yankee Hotel Foxtrot

Wilco's Yankee Hotel Foxtrot simply has more depth than anything released in the new millennium. Song by song it relates the difficulties of the times and personal heartache - two of my favourites.

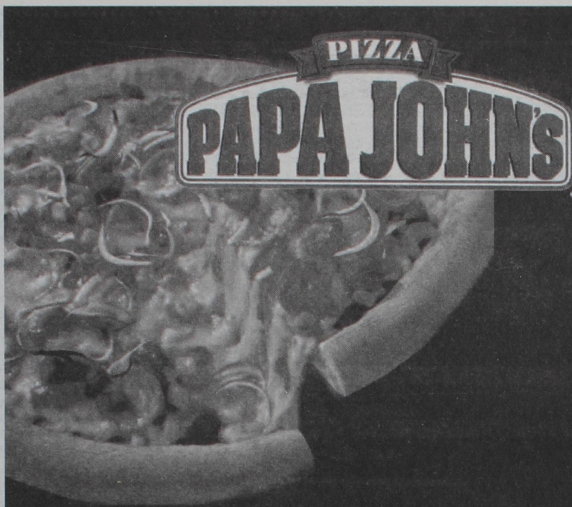
AK

Sigur Ros
Ágætis Byrjun

A sonic representation of beauty, love and life itself. It has everything from making you feel great about life to bringing you to tears everytime through the pure beauty of the haunting vocals and slow relaxing instrumentals. Their silence says everything.

JP

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UNI RUGBY PLAYERS CAT-JOLED

By COURIER SPORTS STAFF

WITH NEWCASTLE University currently lying in fourth place in the BUSA rankings, The Cats, a South African Super 12 Rugby Union Team, paid tribute to the huge success of our Rugby Union teams through a 'Question and Answer' session on Thursday 13 February.

With both the Men's and Ladies Rugby team finishing runners up in their respective Premier Leagues and hoping to bring home silverware in the BUSA Championship, the recognition from a successful international team will no doubt bolster the confidence and expectation of both teams.

The Cats Squad, which included springboks, Bobby Skinstad, James Dalton, André Pretorius and Springbok Assistant Coach Tim Lane, answered questions put to them by a selected audience of students from Rugby Union Teams.

The session compered and Newcastle's Deputy Director of Sport, Colin Blackburn, said: "The Centre and Athletic Union were delighted to be asked to host such an event."

"It is recognition of Newcastle University's sporting pedigree and of Rugby Union in

particular, where the men's and ladies 1st XV's were losing semi finalists in last year's BUSA competition."

"It gave our high performing athletes the chance to 'pick the brains' of professional coaches and players to see what it takes to play professional rugby union at the top level."

"From the team perspective it is hoped that the session will give our teams the competitive edge in future BUSA matches."

The Cats completed their tour with a 26-14 victory over a Newcastle Falcons XV on Friday 14 February which included former Newcastle University students, Hugh Vyvyan, Tom May and Hall Charlton as well as current Elite Athletes Squad members Geoff Parling and Sandy Mitchell.

The visit of the Cats confirmed Newcastle University's Rugby's reputation continues to grow from strength to strength at present and recognition from across the globe was greatly appreciated in the week when qualification to the BUSA Championship was guaranteed.

With Newcastle Men facing Heriot Watt and the Women playing Birmingham at Cochrane Park on Wednesday, expectations will be high that both teams will play a major part in the BUSA campaign, and hopefully the comments of The Cats will help them go one place better this season.



The Cats Squad

VALUABLE EXPERIENCE FOR PLAY-OFFS

Men's Lacrosse Tournament

By TOM DANIELL And GUY OLDRING

FRESH FROM their victory over York, the men's lacrosse team hoping to continue their winning streak travelled up to Edinburgh.

The tournament involving five teams, kicked off with a rare mistake from the Newcastle defence against Stirling letting the first blood go to the opposition.

But after some big hits from Paddy Balfour and Andy Gemmel, an inspirational opening goal by Captain Mark Webb stopped the rot and the rampage began.

Some nifty linking between the midfield and attack led to Paul opening what was to be a huge goal scoring account.

With some sturdy defending from Dan Hutchinson, and thunderbolts from Andy Gemmel and Paul, a final score 5-1, proved Newcastle were a force to be reckoned with.

The next match was a clash with league leaders and tournament favourites the Edinburgh Allstars.

The game got off to a fast start with both teams unleashing endless attacks but the Uni goalie, Big Al, stood strong and the first blow was Newcastle's as Paul's, now famed, over the shoulder shot flew into the top corner of the net.

Solid defending kept the Newcastle Nukes in the game and at half time the score was one a piece.

The second half split the men from the boys and although Newcastle physically overpowered the opponents, Edinburgh eventually ended victorious with a 4-1 win.

Playing a very experienced Glasgow side, Newcastle struggled to find their form as the fatigue set in and the first half ended with Newcastle down a goal to nil.

It was down to Captain Mark Webb to

pull his team back together, and after a passionate speech, Newcastle played as if they were telepathically connected.

With text book plays and fine linking up with Guy Oldring, Paul saw fit to score twice ending the game in a fair draw with two goals a piece.

The final match was one that Newcastle had been waiting for all day: arch rivals Durham!

As soon as the whistle went it was clear there was no love to be lost between these two teams as Newcastle stood solid and Durham's dirty play saw tripping, pushing and slashing.

This however, only proved to Newcastle that they had the skill and finesse that would eventually win them the match.

More outstanding saves from Big Al Craddock and commanding leadership from Coach Webb in midfield, consolidated Newcastle's dominance in the first half.

With powerful runs and mind boggling gooseteps, Paddy Balfour rounded the Toff goal to place a fantastic shot over the head of their keeper to end the half 1-0 up.

The second half was similar to the first with big hits and slashes flying in every direction, but unlike in usual games it was the awesome Newcastle defence that made the difference in this epic.

A cohesive team effort involving Jim Allen, Will Lucas and Scouse annihilated the opposition, and this constant counter offensive soon deteriorated and demoralised the Durham side.

Finally, Paul rubbed salt into their beaten down wounds as he saw fit to rap another blinder to end the game 2-0.

Unfortunately, Newcastle missed out on the final due to goal difference, but with 2 wins, a draw and only one defeat to Edinburgh, the Newcastle Men's Lacrosse team once shunned for their inexperience seem set to turn a few heads at the playoffs next month.

BUSA KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS

Congratulations to the teams successful enough to contend for silverware this season

MEN'S BADMINTON

In the BUSA Shield v. De Montford @ home. The Seconds play UMIST away in the Vase.

WOMEN'S BADMINTON

The Firsts reached the Shield and will play Aston @ home on Wednesday

MEN'S FENCING

Newcastle play away to St Andrews on Wednesday in the BUSA Championship.

WOMEN'S FENCING

The women play Bye @ Kings Walk on Wednesday in the Shield.

MEN'S FOOTBALL

The seconds reached the Vase but a postponed match against Glasgow Caledonian means they will have to play them before Wednesday to see if they reach the Quarter-Finals.

MEN'S HOCKEY

The Seconds play Durham Fourths @ Longbenton on Wednesday in the Vase.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Newcastle play away against St Mary's in the Championship on Wednesday.

LACROSSE

Newcastle play away against Loughborough in the BUSA Championship.

NETBALL

The ladies take on Worcester away in the BUSA Shield on Wednesday.

MEN'S RUGBY UNION

The men's Firsts play Heriot Watt @ Cochrane Park in the BUSA Championship. The seconds have Nottingham @ Cochrane Park in the Trophy

WOMEN'S RUGBY

The women will take on Birminham this Wednesday @ Cochrane Park in the BUSA Championship

WOMEN'S SQUASH

The team take on Manchester on home ground in the Championship.

TABLE TENNIS

The men travel to Birmingham for their first BUSA Championship match on Wednesday.

MEN'S TENNIS

After a 5-1 win away against Leicester last Wednesday, the team progress to the Quarter-Finals of the Shield, playing either Manchester or Bye @ home.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

The women play Edinburgh away on Wednesday in the BUSA Championship.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Newcastle meet Edinburgh @ home in the first round of the Championship.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

The ladies will take on Crewe & Alsager this Wednesday @ home in the BUSA Shield. Ciara McNamara was selected for the British Universities Squad rather than Naomi Allum.

UNI ATTRACTS GOLF STARS

By DANIEL BRENNAN

Newcastle University is currently basking in the reflective glory of their golf team, following their triumph in the BUSA Northern Premier League.

The team, which comfortably overcame opposition from Loughbrough to win the regional league, now progress through to the National Championship, and with a particularly strong squad this season, they look in good form to progress to the later rounds of the tournament.

Alongside the outstanding dedication of the squad, much of the success of the team has been due to the efforts made by the Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport (CRPS) in conjunction with golf's governing body, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R&A), in developing golf within the University.

As a member of the R&A bursary scheme, the University receives funding for all the members of the team which is used to provide professional coaching and cover other expenses.

A great tribute to the success of Newcastle University sports has seen two international calibre golf players joining our establishment, over and above the more lucrative American sports scholarships.

The two new members, Nuno Brito e Cunha and Faye Sanderson, have been awarded elite individual bursaries to help with their golf development, being among only 14 such awards made by the R&A.

Nuno, who won the Portuguese Amateur at the age of 15, became the first overseas player to be awarded such a Bursary, receiving £3,000, whilst Faye, who played for England Girls last year, was awarded £2,500.

Both students chose Newcastle because it perfectly combined both their academic needs and sporting ambitions.

Faye shunned the opportunity of a golf scholarship in the USA in order to study for a "meaningful qualification" in case circumstance or injury prevent her from fulfilling her ambition, and potential, of becoming a touring professional golfer.

Nuno, who represented his native Portugal in the World Amateur Team Championship just before Christmas and is widely regarded as a player with real potential, also has dreams of being a touring professional.

He too decided it was wise to have qualifications to fall back on, realising the hugely competitive nature of sports at the highest level.

Both Nuno and Faye will now have to put their studies on the back burner to join the rest of the team for what promises to be a successful Championship campaign over the next few weeks.

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MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2003

BLUES BASKET VICTORY TWICE

Dodgy scoreboard forces Newcastle to play extra time to reach Quarter-Finals

Men's Basketball

Newcastle	96
Hull	94

By NAOMI ALLUM

THE BLUES set out to conquer one of their most challenging oppositions of the season as they faced an undefeated and unquantified Hull side, in their first knock-out round of the BUSA Shield.

In an astonishing game, plagued by a scoring error the Blues were forced to win the match twice over in a period of extra time in order to qualify for the final 8 of the competition.

Although they proved out right twice to be the deserved winners, the Blues were continually on the back foot and were forced to show their will to win in a momentous come back.

In a hotly contested first quarter the Blues maintained composure and matched Hull near point for point to finish with a closing score line of 13-12,

Hull narrowly carrying a one goal advantage.

A loss of concentration from the Blues saw the Hull side gradually edge away from Newcastle in the second quarter as their charismatic breaks and periods of attacking play proved too much for the Blues defence.

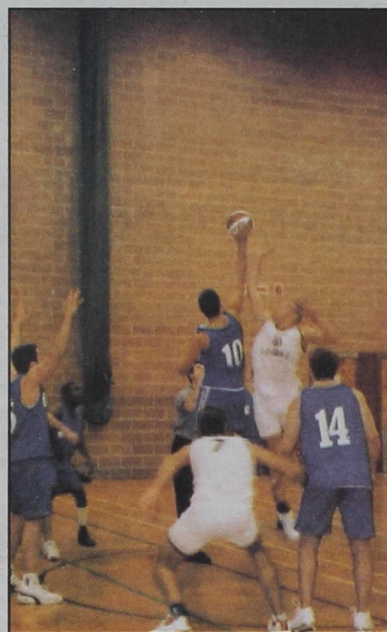
At the end of the match Coach Phil Percival said: "We were forced to ensure that every player on the court became a role player, often abandoning their offence work and helping to break down their attacking play."

However at the closing point of the second quarter Newcastle were still on the back foot, with Hull streaking away with a 41-29 point advantage.

The Blues were unable to challenge Hull's 12 point advantage in the third quarter and despite demonstrations of impressive team work and offensive inspiration Newcastle were still 13 points down at the start of the fourth and final quarter.

A newly gained sense of urgency gripped Newcastle and after a string of unanswered points the home side forced their way back into the match, continually closing down Hull's advantage.

Encouraged by a forever supportive



crowd and lead on by the cheers of the Blue Angels, Newcastle took the lead for the first time in the match with only three minutes left to play.

After the few nail biting closing minutes the electronic scoreboard read a draw at 82-82, to the amazement of the crowd and the home side, as seconds earlier a three pointer had only been given the credit on a two.

Although Newcastle had rightfully won the match the decision was taken by both umpires and coaches to play a period of extra time, leaving it up to Newcastle to once again secure a victory.

And that is exactly what they did. Percival added: "We stayed true to our undefeated home record."

"The decision was the only fair one to take but it just meant we proved twice we deserved to win."

Wednesday Fixture: Warwick @ Claremont Sports Hall in the Quarter-Finals



LEAGUE LADS LEAVE LEICESTER LACKING

Rugby League

Leicester	16
Newcastle	22

By PHIL SKILLEN

NEWCASTLE ALMOST ensured Nation league survival with a hard fought win over rivals Leicester last Sunday afternoon in the Midlands.

Newcastle started brightly enough but soon found themselves on the wrong end of a quick tap penalty seeing Leicester take a 4-0 lead with an unconverted try.

But Newcastle hit back almost immediately with a Hamilton penalty reducing the deficit to two points.

But the Blues found the going difficult against a well organised and committed Leicester defence and found themselves 10-2 behind after another home try.

However as a testament to the progress made by the team the try seemed to spur them into life and they upped the level by a good two gears.

Good work from the pack left the Uni in good field position and almost right on cue 5/8 Rob Spurr produced a moment of pure and undiluted skill.

He pulled a wonderful dummy out of the bag, which took the entire Leicester team in, and then sauntered over the line without one hand laid on him-Superb!

The second half was a see-saw affair with both teams enjoying periods of dominance.

Newcastle soon drew level when the ever impressive Spurr coolly slotted over a penalty, which were coming in increasing numbers as the Leicester team seemed to favour a tackling style that mainly targeted the head.

Newcastle took the lead when a kick from Half back Jon Farrell saw hard working Second row Neil Bellerby pounce making the score 16-10 after Spurr's conversion.

Then disaster struck; an interception by the home winger saw an 80 metre sprint for a converted try 16-16.

This made for a tense finale but, again, good work by the pack left the stage set for flamboyant prop Rich Jones to sell an outrageous dummy and hand-off to the Leicester cover and gallop over from 15 metres to send the Blues into raptures, just before the final whistle.

Stand-in Captain Spurr said: "This just shows how far we've come since September, it was tough be we were tougher!"

Wednesday Fixture: TASC away.