

Juice

Easter Special March 1997

JAMES

Sit down with the boys

RALPH FIENNES

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 **FINNAIR**

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, can be reached directly by flights from both Manchester & London with FINNAIR, the national carrier.

The Scandanavian city is situated on the Baltic & so is popular with Russians buying western goods. There are regular trains to St.Petersburg & Moscow & in theory, you could board a train in Helsinki & go right through to Beijing.

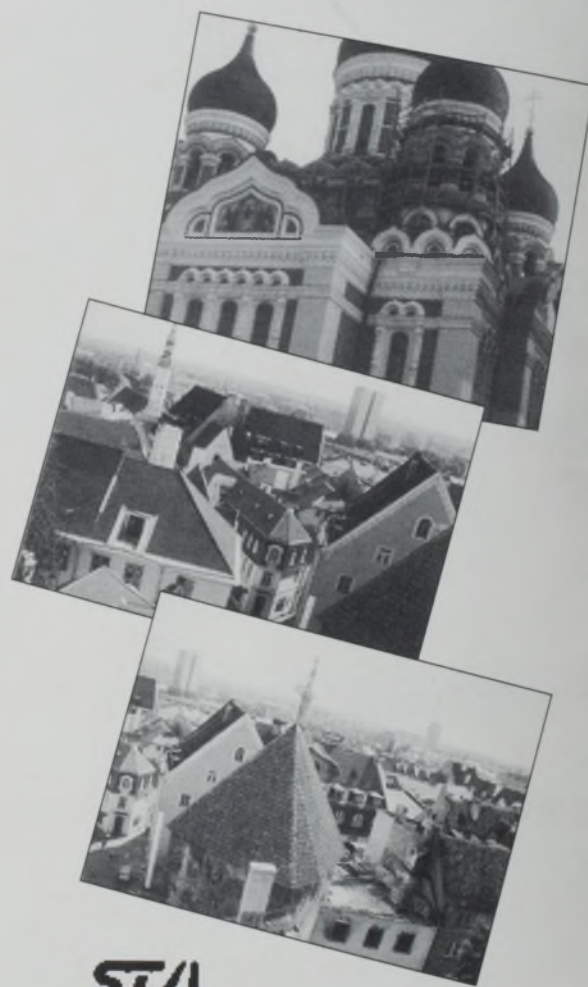
Just a short trip across the Baltic is Estonia & its capital Tallin, again served by regular FINNAIR flights. Although newly independent from the old Soviet Union, Estonia is a country with its own rich history dating back to beyond the Middle Ages.

Tallin itself is dominated by the walled medieval old city which has a strong German influence due to the Teutonic crusaders & subsequent German merchants inhabiting the area from the 13th to 19th Centuries. Since independence in 1991, the city has been renovated & restored & appears totally continental with many street cafes & entertainers.

Just outside of the city is the beach suburb of Pirita, easily accessible by bus & very popular with Tallin residents on summer weekends. Also recommended is Kadriog, again a short distance from the centre which has a large park and palace complex designed for the Russian Tsar, Peter the Great.

Leeds Student, together with STA and FINNAIR is offering a lucky reader the chance to win 2 flights to Finland. If you want to explore this little corner of the continent which has much to show that is new & undiscovered simply answer the following question & send your entry to STA/FINNAIR competition, Leeds Student, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH. Closing date April 18. The prize must be taken within 12 months.

Q: Who left Finland in 1917 to lead the Russian revolution & consequently change the world?



STA
STA TRAVEL

Juice

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March 1997

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STUDENT SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS present a DAVID SMITH magazine directed by WILLEM JOHN JASPERT
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Film for thought

Fed up with outer space? Fall back to earth with *The English Patient*, an epic film about love, war and the desert. CLARE LISTER meets Anthony Minghella and Ralph Fiennes and flings a sandstorm of questions at them

IF you put together the right ingredients in the correct way, you are bound to produce a wonderful dish; and if your dish is your own new recipe, sprinkled with a delightful array of herbs, and presented in the most appetising way imaginable to men, your diner will believe he has landed in Elysium.

I thought I was seated in heaven viewing this film, but, when placed face to face with director Anthony Minghella and lead star Ralph Fiennes, there could be no greater paradise. Not only are these two of the most sought after men in all Hollywood, but they are also two of the most intelligent people under spotlight.

It can be of no surprise that *The English Patient* swept the board of Oscar nominations, and received first class applause across the globe. The film springs from the inspirational book by Booker prize winner Michael Ondaatje, and proudly has as its producer Saul Zaentz, renowned for making difficult yet highly successful films -

Amadeus and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to name but two. Anthony Minghella suggests it is the involvement of these two people that ensured the success of the film:

"It's not by accident that Michael was on the set so much, or Saul. This has been a very special collaboration. It comes from the fact that everyone involved with the film loved Michael's book." Minghella was particularly mesmerised by this un-put-down-able book, recalling how he read it in one gulp: "I felt

like I was reading a document of someone remembering a film they'd seen. It was so full of image, it's much more a record of a visual journey than a novel. I called up Saul and said I can't get this book out my mind, and I really think there's a picture here, but I don't know how to do it. So Saul read it and rang me back and said, I think there's a picture too, but I don't know how to do it either." Eighteen screenplays later, Minghella finally arrived at the winning formula.

The intelligence and the complex structure of the book are maintained in the film, so that on first viewing you really feel as if you are searching in someone's imagination, and piecing together a fragmented story, rather than passively watching a film. "We had Heroditus as a central motif, we had arguments about Kipling's literature in it. The central character was marooned and burned beyond recognition in a bed remembering things about Europe and the war." Stimulating,

but incredibly complicated.

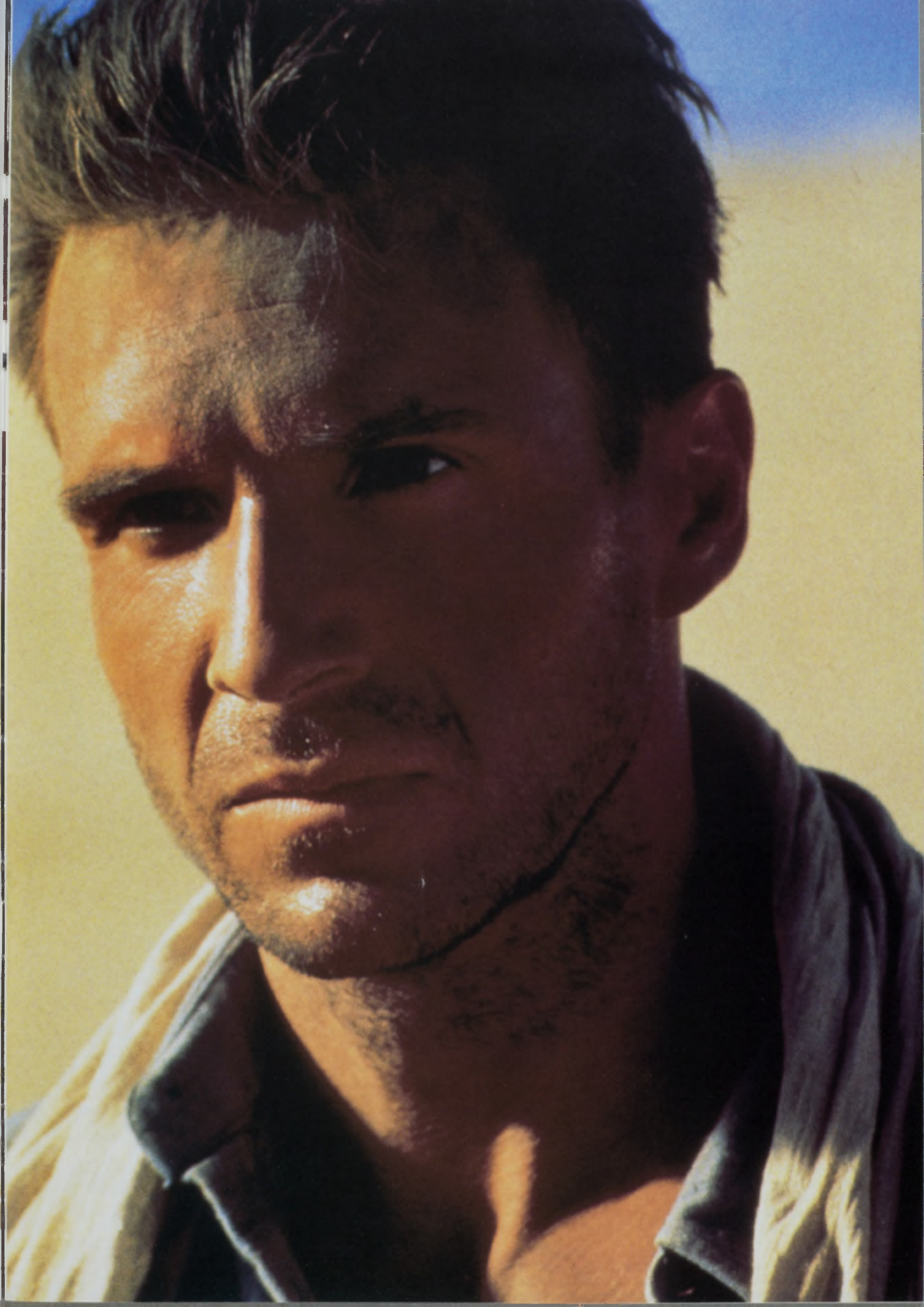
Because of this complexity Minghella was fully aware of the problems of confusing the audience: "The film had to state its terms very quickly. In the first two or three minutes of the film you invite the audience in or you exclude them. They need to know what kind of story, and the way you're going to tell the story, and so I was very conscious of trying to design something which stated the terms, which told you this was a film which was going to re-examine images and re-examine ideas and deconstruct them and reconstruct them in new and interesting ways."

Fiennes too was very conscious of the intelligence of the film, its depth and its intense infrastructure. "This film is one step ahead of the audience. If they had been allowed to get ahead of it they might have lost patience with it. Pieces of the film come together, you don't quite know what is going to happen to Hana, what is her relationship with the patient, and slowly you see there was this love affair that happened and the effect it had."

THE *English Patient*, at its basest level, is the story of four individuals striving to overcome the events which happened to them during the Second World War. The English patient remains anonymous for much of the novel for he is unable to remember his name, but gradually his memory returns, and the audience decipher his past simultaneously with him. Interweaved with this discovery and rebirth are two love stories, both very real, and both with shades of tragedy.

As much of the film is told in the form of memory, there had to be a clear distinction between two locations, Italy post-war, and the desert and Egypt pre-war, or as Minghella puts it, "being confused is not a useful activity in the cinema," and so







there were clear camera, light and locational differences. Tuscany is green while the desert is full of sand, which provoked numerous problems for the film crew:

"I hated every second in the desert. It is a film-maker's nightmare. The only thing I can think of is that it is rather like being a calligrapher. You load your brush up with paint and then the moment you commit it you can't undo that commitment and I felt that rigour of filming there. There's a scene where Ralph walks along the side of the dune. It seems very straightforward to shoot that. But first of all you have to get the camera there; there's no way a camera is there because it is not meant to have cameras. Then the necessary syntax of film-making is that you refine things, you do them more than once, you change the speed of a shot, you change the speed of the movement. As soon as someone walks across a sand dune, they walk back and there are now two trails. And you come round the other side to change the angle of the shot and all the mess you've made with the film crew is there in front of you.

when Saul and I watched a documentary about David Lean making *Lawrence of Arabia*, and the photographer said David Lean was very strange when making this film. He kept wanting to move 60km between each shot, and he went a bit crazy, and Saul said to me, you are not moving 60km and you are not going to go crazy, but in fact what you want to do when you're there is to move 60km and you feel like you're going crazy." At this point Fiennes laughs rather like a

giggly schoolboy in recollection of his experience of the desert: "I loved the desert. I found the location very hypnotic, very moving, but at the same time ironic, because it is a set, and everything has to be shot and fitted into that shape. You're framing bits of desert, and yet it is so enormous and infinite."

It was not only the location that was split in the film. Fiennes' character in the film is both as the English patient and the person he was before he lost his memory and suffered disfiguring burn wounds in a plane crash: "These are two different people and we approach them in two tiers. Of course there was the basic sense they were the same person, but this same person had gone through something in his life, emotional and physical, which had made him someone else. The circumstances of the make-up, the bed, and working with Juliette, this was later in his life. At the heart of it I didn't separate them, even though I knew, because of what I did with my voice, and the way that I looked, that it would seem like two different people, but inside it was the same man."

In fact the make-up that Fiennes wears during his time in bed as the patient renders him completely unrecognisable. "There was a five- to six-hour

application time in latex pieces every morning. They had to be flown out from London to Rome on that day, and the pieces were placed on and repainted. It was like wearing a very tight wetsuit on your skin." Minghella too was

'You feel as if you are really searching in someone's imagination rather than passively watching a film'

amazed at the degree of preparation, but for him the real surprise was seeing the meticulousness of Fiennes' performance: "I think one of the astonishing things about the performance is that I remember Ralph saying early on in Italy, 'I feel like Katherine (his lover pre-war) has been burned into me and when we fell out of the plane somehow I've inherited all the tenderness that she has' and I think it is an unsung part of the performance that the transformation of Ralph's character is not just a physical transformation, but there's almost a spiritual transformation that Ralph achieved. I was doing an interview the other day, and they said, it's not him in the bed is it,

Juliette Binoche on Ralph Fiennes:

"The first time I saw him with the make-up on I had a big laugh, and he was like 'Don't make me laugh, don't make me laugh.' It was nice trying to heal him"

Ralph Fiennes on Juliette Binoche:

"She was everywhere, she permeated the film."

Kristen Scott Thomas on fame:

"It's very exciting. The aim is to be able to work less, yet on better films, and to choose what I like. That's all we aim for."

Ralph Fiennes on fame:

"I'm more than comfortable, I'm happy, I'm thrilled."

Anthony Minghella on life before *The English Patient*:

"There was a neon sign above my head saying 'his films do not make money, his films do not make money'."

Saul Zaentz on the prospect of winning the Oscars:

"Everyone has been given a ballpoint pen and is writing their speeches."



it's somebody else, and I think that's the highest compliment."

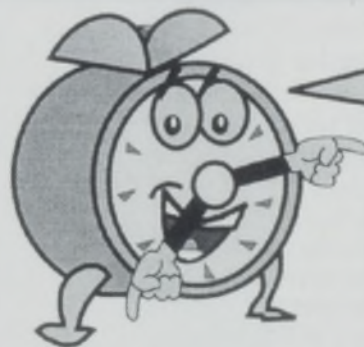
One of the highest compliments has to be the Oscar nominations, which give the film its hype and attention, but these do not make the film any better, and not winning will not make the film any worse. This film is undoubtedly one of the greatest, most haunting, powerful and intelligent films you are likely to see, Minghella is likely to make, and Fiennes is likely to star in. At the core though, it is just a love story. But one I guarantee will give you a greater aftertaste than Cadbury's chocolate orange. You'll want to keep peeling away at the layers.

The English Patient **i** is reviewed on page 23

return of the **manics**



For most of us, JAMES provided the soundtrack to our teenage years. Well, the band who launched a thousand T-shirts are back! And what's more they're as good as they've ever been. CHRIS MOONEY talks to them about dance music, Brian Eno and the madness of Tim Booth...



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'we're the corporals

Going to see James in 1997 is an exercise in nostalgia. In those heady Madchester days of 1990, a James gig was a riotous celebration. It was the closest that any band have got to recreating the clubbing experience. Strobes, trippy projections, skinheads hugging floppy-fringed indie-kids, and all to the sound of a group were obviously enjoying themselves as much as their wide-eyed audience. Anyone who was anyone had a James T-shirt in their wardrobe: if you went to see any band from Manchester then that was the uniform. "Come Home" and "Sit Down" stormed the charts. It seemed, in the words of The Stone Roses, that this was truly what the world was waiting for.

And then it all began to look like fool's gold. The next album, *Seven*, flopped critically amid accusations of pomposity and an overly precious lead singer. Their position as the best live band in Britain seemed a distant memory as the media lined up to give James a good kicking. The guitarist Larry Gott jumped from what looked like a terminally sinking ship, and the band stopped touring. James had sat down, and couldn't get back up again.

But, as Blur and The Charlatans have proved, you can't keep a good band quiet for long. The new single "She's A Star" appeared out of nowhere onto Radio 1, and we all remembered why we liked James all those years ago. Tim Booth's swooping vocals, the lush arrangements, and above all, a tune from the heavens. And, best of all, they're back playing live, ready to teach these new pretenders just how a band can entertain. On the eve of their first British gig for

three years, bassist Jim Glennie and multi-talented guitarist/violinist/trumpet player Saul Davies are in a ebullient mood, ready to take on all-comers. So, why's it been so long?

Saul: "'Cos we wanted to have a break from each other and relax and chill out and get to know our pets again. Larry left the band, so we couldn't tour really." Why did he leave?

"It was stupid really. 'Cos he's an old fella, and he bought a house in Ireland, and he wanted to go and live there, and do carpentry and things, making things out of wood."

Jim: "He just said I don't want to tour and promote anymore."

Saul: "i.e. he said I want all the money, but I don't want to do any of the work. I mean, he started making his living from making music when he was fifteen, and he's fucking 38 or something now. He's fucking had enough. If I get to 25 years of doing this I'd fuck off as well." So the thrill of being a pop star hasn't worn off for you two yet?

Jim: "Nah, it's banging, it's fun. It's better than doing most other jobs, get to travel the world, stay in nice hotels..."

Saul: "And get to be a complete arse."

James have been around for so long now, they must surely be entitled to a wall in the Hard Rock Cafe next to Eric Clapton's toothpicks and Mark Knopfler's sweaty headbands. It's not a observation that goes down too well with Saul, who comes across like he's been taking lessons from the Liam Gallagher school of etiquette:

"Well, it doesn't feel like it is, but I suppose if you look at it on paper then you can only come to one inevitable conclusion. I wouldn't say aristocracy, but we've certainly got longevity."

What about the barons of pop then?

"Yeah, that'll do. [*Adopts plummy voice*] The corporals of pop. We're coming up through the ranks again."

Jim: "It's just all the time there's areas that we're changing in musically. If we thought we were shitty and boring then I think we'd kick it in the head. We're prepared to take more risks now and push things to further extremes, and not treat it so seriously."

corporals

Someone who can obviously take the credit for James' new laid-back attitude is the master of ambient, the man responsible for the criminally relaxed "Music for Airports," Brian Eno. The James album he produced, *Wah-Wah*, is a mish-mash of experimental noise and half-revealed tunes - not much to write home about. But as a psychiatrist he seemed to have worked wonders. Jim's face lights up when he recalls their days together.

"He's brilliant. He's a very very funny man. He's like a business man. 'You know, 'Hullo, luvvies.' It's like meeting the fucking vicar or something. But after a while, you realise that he's got a ridiculously stupid sense of humour and he's incredibly playful. If you've got a mad idea, he's like 'that's interesting, let's do that then. Everything's at a weird tangent, looking at odd ways of approaching things, nothing's ever ridiculous or out of order. If the drummer's having trouble with a beat, then he'll go 'You have a go Jim.' We've all had a go, doing these bizarre spazzy rhythms totally incompetently, but somehow it'll help you get what you want. And Brian'll go 'hmmmm, great idea. I'll just go and do that now.'"

Saul: "With his great fucking bald head bobbing about."

Jim: "And then he'll go 'I rather enjoyed that actually.' He's absolutely fucking hilarious. The whole atmosphere is very free, open, relaxed, and not intense or heavy at all. It rubs off, you end up not treating what you do so seriously."

Saul: "And you get more out of it, you're not so precious. It's so destructive when you can't see anything beyond what you're doing. You confer an amazing amount of responsibility and importance on what you do personally. That's just really really stupid. I mean Bach could get away with it, and Mozart, but that was just them on their own. We're a band, we enjoy what we get out of it."

With all the stick that James have taken from the press, it's surprising that they're even deigning to speak to them these days. But, refreshingly, it seems the band are putting a lot of the blame for their wilderness years firmly on their own shoulders. Or, for Saul, on one particular pair of shoulders:

"A lot of it was down to us. I think in a lot of ways we deserve to get slagged. We've said things in the press and did things, and came over like a

band that wanted to be slagged off. We made it easy for them. To be honest with you, and I'm not having a go at him, but Tim, especially Tim, said some very very stupid fucking things in the press over the years. It's no surprise to me that he personally gets slagged. He doesn't read the press. I think he fucking should, and then he'd realise what he should say and what he shouldn't say.

"But, at the end of the day, do you waste time getting het up about the NME, or do you just get on with it. We're the ones who are playing a sell-out tour, we're the ones whose single has gone in at Number 9 in the charts. Fuck them."

A couple of years ago the main accusation of papers like the "esteemed" NME was that James had gone "stadium rock," conjuring up images of earnest guitar solos and waving lighters. This was always a lazy comparison, especially when you see James live: the audience could easily be at Back to Basics. The music is based around a driving simplicity, chopping



we've done some mad techno music under the name of "Money." It's fucking top. The whole thing about dance music is that it's so difficult not to be influenced by it, when so much of it is so fucking good. That Sash track, "Encore Une Fois", that's single of the year. It gets you, I fucking love it. Faithless as well."

Jim: "The sound is so much better than some shitty little guitar amp and an indie-stink bass sound."

So have James abandoned their indie credibility? This is a band who began in homage to The Smiths, remember. Of course they haven't.

Saul: "There are bands that we all

saw, that make us say that we like guitar music. I like Suede and The Manic Street Preachers. They're the two best bands in Britain I think." Any new bands?

"Yeah, Suede and The Manic Street Preachers. They're new aren't they? New to me, they've only made three albums each. Oh, you mean the really new ones, the kids? [ponders for three seconds] Naaaah, fuck 'em."

Jim: "I quite like Mansun." Saul is sceptical:

"Do you? When have you ever heard anything by Mansun? What was it called? How did it go?"

"You know, that single, the new one."

"Bollocks, he's making it up. I know who I like: The Longpigs. [he breaks into song, to the bemusement of the pensioners in the bar] 'SHHEE SAAAAYYYYEEED.' They're supporting us in America. We're bigger than them you see. We're huge in America, how many have we sold, 19 million?"


"No, 850,000"

"Well, that's not bad."

Now that they're really big pop stars, you'd perhaps think that James would have been tempted to "do a Phil Collins" and head off to France to avoid their taxes, or go to America where they're truly loved. Saul's a patriot though, and he's staying. But that doesn't mean he likes the state of our beautiful nation. (Anyone who has sympathy with the travellers' cause should stop reading here)

"I come back to Britain, and people say things to me like 'the police, it's their fault. The police are crap.' I mean, don't be a stupid cunt. If someone raped their sister or broke into their house - not that they'd have a house, 'cos they all live in a fucking tent -, or nicked your dog ... I mean, shut it. You'd be straight to the police. 'We need to make hash legal, then Britain would be great.' What a load of stupid cunts. We're so wrapped up with the idea that it's the police or the government's fault. Shut up, and get off your arse and do something. The whole attitude is 'Britain's crap, the weather's crap, jobs are crap, people are getting paid crap for doing shitty jobs, there's no hope apart from pop music.' That's not good enough, they should get off their arses. I'm about the least right-wing bloke you'll meet, but it's a good example of this country: you say people should get off their arses and you're immediately told: 'You're Norman Tebbit.' It's the assumption that lazing around and doing fuck all is somehow cool, and makes you a socialist. Stop fucking moaning."

Words that would fit snugly in the mouth of Johnny Rotten in his prime. So much for the James of press legend: a collective of self-obsessed vegans whose ambition is to play a residence at Wembley with Simple Minds. But that was always a myth anyway: it's time to set the record straight. James are and always have been one of our best bands, a live experience that everybody should see at least once in their lives. If you missed the gig at the Town & Country Club then invest in the *Live at the G-Mex* video to see what all the fuss is about. And next time you read in the papers they're a bunch of self-satisfied session musicians, simply turn the page and turn up your stereo.



'It's no surprise to me that Tim Booth gets slagged... He's said some stupid fucking things over the years'
Saul Davies, James

single chords and huge drumbeats, building up and slowing down in huge crescendos. In fact, it's a sound that's not a million miles away from the rhythms of the best house music. I doubt if Tim Booth could get away with his epileptic dancing to Simple Minds. Not surprisingly, the band admit to "getting on one" every now and then:

Saul: "Yeah, we want to open a new club. It's called the Seal Club. Boom boom. Yeah, I go clubbing in Edinburgh, Glasgow, fucking amazing."

Jim: "We all love dance music. I think it's the music that excites the band most at the moment. You can't help but be influenced by it. We could never hope to compete in that market, not as James anyway."

Saul: "But *outside* the parameters of James,



Pics: Willem Jaspers

of pop'

10
Out of the shadows.
The man behind Goldie's album
Timeless and one of the UK's
most influential dance labels talks
exclusively to NICK O'MEALLY



Moving Shadow

PLAYFORD

It's just over six years since Moving Shadow was born as a reaction to a rave culture in crisis. A lot has changed since then, dance music has mutated into countless genres, stretched to the point of saturation. An exception is Drum 'n' Base- a relative new comer to the popular appetite, but with foundations reaching back to a hardcore era.

At the helm of the Drum 'n' Base ship is Moving Shadow, arguably, the label of the moment, a status not likely to impress the man responsible for it's success, Rob Playford. Moving Shadow has been involved in the evolution of Drum 'n' Base, since 1990 (one hundred releases ago), way before the media decided to take notice. Only now as the music reaches new heights of popularity is Playford gaining the recognition and attention he deserves.

As the producer of Goldie's

landmark album Timeless, Playford's CV reads 'raver done good'. From the humble origins of a Stevenage bedroom, one keyboard and a sampler, the Shadow empire has grown into a global concern. America, Japan, Germany, the list goes on. But to get to the top you've got to start at the bottom. In Rob's case this came in the form of a mobile disco (Sorry Rob sound system)

'When those stupid records burst into the charts two years ago people started saying "Yeah jungle, we've always been into it..." fuck off'

called Charisma. Next came Acid House and the golden age of illegal parties. In 1990, however, things started to turn sour as police clamped down on suburban raves convincing many a stalwart that enough was enough: "At one particular warehouse party people were getting beaten up by the police, truncheons across the face. It was time to give it a rest. I brought a sampler and decided to knock up a tune". Moving Shadow was born.

Obviously pretty good at 'knocking up tunes,' Playford's first release 'Orbital madness' became a cult classic. Then in 1992 came the sound of breakbeat. "We'd been doing different stuff

as 'Two bad mice,' changing up the way we were editing breakbeats, which was something not done before. ('Bombscare' now regarded as an all time proto Drum 'n' Bass classic sold 35,000 copies.) It was just like looping a breakbeat in a normal Hip-Hop style, then we started retriggering and cutting so that it made a different groove. From there the whole scene started to go that way".

Playford's attitude to music has been shaped by an understanding of an early House scene, when people made tunes for no other reason but to rock a dance floor: "That's the way Moving Shadow works," he explained, "The actual ethics and feeling behind the original House people, that's what we do now".

It's an outlook evident in his approach to DJing. Unlike many a 'credible' jungalist, a typical Playford set (if there is one) isn't likely to sound uniform or slip into monotony. "I come from a scene six or seven years ago where you could hear Soul To Soul followed by Inner city, Ten

city and nu- beat, the whole spectrum"

On the current scene "people tend to focus too much on one particular style. I like to spread it a little more. A good promoter should realise that there are five or six different branches of jungle. It's good to put on a range of dj's to cover a whole spectrum. If not it doesn't work and you get a very narrow crowd and set of styles".

The role-call of different artists currently on the shadow label reflects this attitude. Just look at Omni Trio's soulful, clean breakbeat's alongside Deep Blues contrasting tearing snares and hectic bass.

With all the current media exposure Drum 'n' Bass is receiving, the music looks like a prime contender for mainstream stardom. If Drum 'n' Base was to replace House on the nation's dance floors, surely Moving Shadow's current level of credibility will be undermined?. Something that Rob doesn't think will happen: "House music is much bigger, not on the trendy club circuit level but

globally. You can go into every club in the world and know your going to hear House music.

It's far too big. Maybe in the future it will take over but it's a long way off. Drum 'n' Bass is always changing. We are always inventing something new. It's hard for the mass of people to keep up with".

Goldie's debut album Timeless was engineered by Rob. Any plans for a new one? "Were working on it at the moment, but it's proving quite slow. Goldie's very busy doing all of his celebrity stuff, both of us have businesses that demand time. It's not as easy as it was a couple of years ago with Timeless, That took a long time but this one is taking a stupid long time. We've got it all in our heads but obviously no one else can hear them. Our last track was 16 minutes long. It's been a nightmare for me. I've got 60 tracks of it filling up the whole of my mixing desk. That track alone has taken a couple of months".

You had the same problem with Timeless, why does it take you so long?: "Its very strange. You want something to sound good so you just let it role on, then you take it in slightly a different direction, which is more interesting. Our first track with KRS rapping freestyle the whole way through was actually eight minutes long until we cut two and a half minutes off the end, which is an achievement for us".

At the height of 'Glam,' clubbing labels like Moving Shadow were dismissed as post-Hardcore relics. Now everyone wants a piece of the action, (just look at Mixmag's latest drum 'n' Bass directory). This kind of hypocrisy would annoy most people, but not Rob: "The Drum 'n' Bass scene's never had any exposure, everyone ignored us right from the start. We've grown something ourselves without any help from anyone else. When those stupid Jungle records burst into the charts two years ago people took notice and started saying 'yeh Jungle, we've always been into it...' fuck off. We knew what we were doing if we cared about anybody else we would be making Southern Shandy House music." 1

Death in Vegas



**BREAKBEATACIDGUITARBLEEPDUBROCKFUCKE
DUPJUMBLESOUNDCLASH. Sounds simple?
SARAH MONK decodes it all with Richard Fearless**

“I’m sorry, my brains gone a bit spastic today”. Well, no-one ever said that speaking to a Heavenly Socialite and champion of the “never say no philosophy” was going to be easy.

Richard Fearless. Born in Zambia, collector of plastic junk toys and a big fan of “pogoing in the face till I’m blue”. Partnered with Steve Hellier, Fearless is one half of the “Death In Vegas” team that have crushed brains with tracks such as “Opium Shuffle”, “Dirt”, and the massive ‘Rocco’.

Live, the team eschew any backing-tape bollocks

in favour of live musicians, and they make for one helluva show. They are tipped for ‘97 to ‘do a Chemicals’ and have been described as “music ideal for the sell-out generation”.

It looks as if Fearless and Hellier are going to

from a very early age, collecting anything and everything he liked the sound of. Hooking up with Steve Hellier after meeting him through a mutual friend, they began playing together four years ago under the name “Dead Elvis”. Since

isn’t dead at all” Fearless began. “A lot of people are going on about this fucked-up Heavenly Social sound, but a lot of what goes on at the Social has house roots in funk and disco. The whole Social sound has exploded though. A lot of people

is evident both in their live shows and on the new album “Dead Elvis”. As for the Elvis fixation, Fearless sounded puzzled when questioned why he loved the biggest Burger King of them all. “Well, I collect all sorts of junk” he replied, “and I’m really into loads of trashy American stuff, so I suppose that’s where the obsession comes from”.

Elvis may well be dead, but long live the filthy messed-up noises that have made Richard Fearless cooler than. Even if he does have “a fucking big problem” at airport check-in desks with his surname, and his brain has turned to jelly, when there’s music as good as this, who cares?

**‘We have a never say no philosophy.
We’re into anything that’s good’**

make sure that big dirty beats are here to stay, along with a little bit of reggae, funk, Big Rock and soundtrack vibes. Bigbeatacidguitar... you get the picture.

Fearless explained that he began DJ’ing through playing at friends houses, having been totally and irredeemably into music

becoming “Death In Vegas”, three singles have been released and now an album which Fearless describes as “a collection of moods, the sort of music we like to listen to”.

So, spastic-brain, where do you stand on the future of dance music?. “House music, I think.

have copied the Chemicals, and done it badly”.

As for his own musical style, Fearless explained that both he and Hellier have “very wide-ranging tastes”, but are basically into “anything that’s good, from rock to reggae”. This general mish-mash of influences and styles



A BIT OF FRY OR LAURIE?

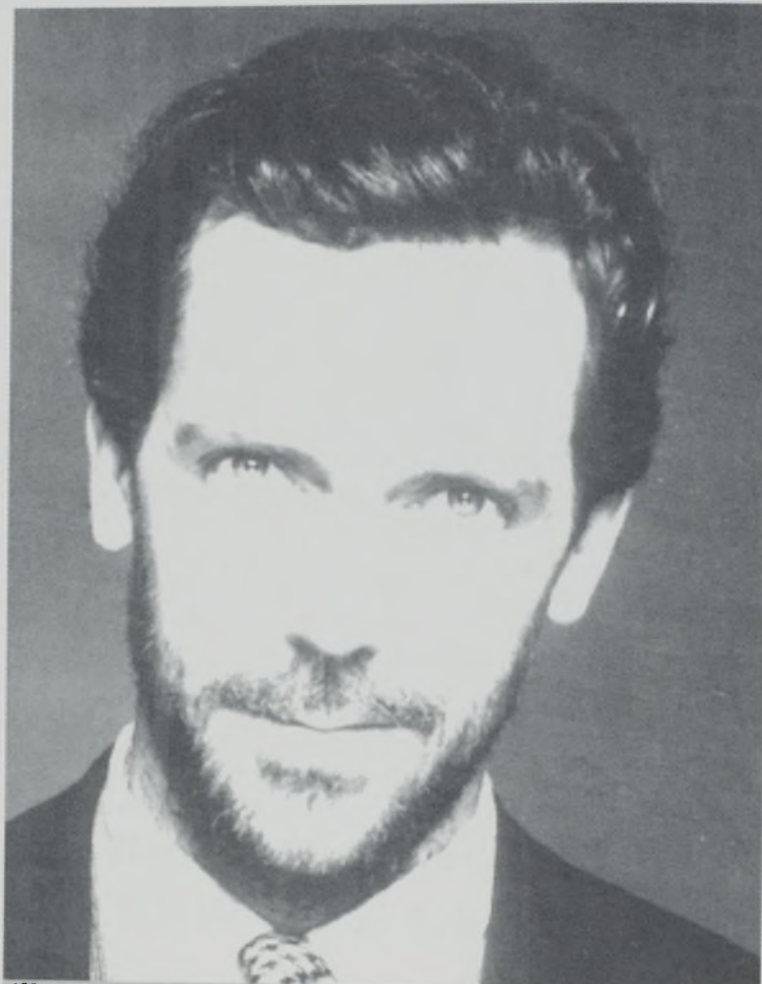
Hugh Laurie speaks with more humour than he writes. **LINDEN THORNTON** and **SPIKE** discover if he can outwit his old sparring partner Stephen Fry

Think Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry also springs to mind so, on hearing that Laurie has finally followed in Fry's footsteps and begun a literary career, a comparison of the two seems inevitable. But how does Laurie's first novel stand up to the plethora of comedian-turned-author books, and in particular the debut novel of his sidekick, Stephen Fry's *The Liar*?

The central character in Laurie's thriller is Thomas Lang, ex-Scots Guard, hireable to the underworld for occasional dirty ops. Lang becomes involved in a twisting, deepening web of intrigue and violence that is as complex as *The Liar*. Fry's character was partly autobiographical and readily believable, whereas Laurie's man Lang has a wit far beyond that which you would normally associate with a former soldier.

This is where the first major distinction between *The Liar* can be made in that, Fry's book was indeed funny, his jokes tended to be drawn into the plot slowly and with a clever touch. *The Gun Seller* has more jokes per square inch but they are less concerned with the plot and in many ways hinder development of characters. The characters in this romp are many and seem to appear as if by magic at any moment when the story turns into a cul-de-sac, and it is this that lends implausibility to the book generally. Providing one remembers that Laurie's only research into ex-soldiers, espionage, high-tech weaponry and the like came solely from other books (probably Alistair McClean) and providing also that one can imagine hearing Laurie's voice reading this book aloud and if one can carefully sift out the unfunny jokes; then the book is bearable, but only just.

Considering the strain involved in reading Laurie's book then, it was with a little trepidation that we went along to see Laurie on his



'I'm emotionally retarded. I love the world of espionage. I'm a real sucker for it'

nationalwide publicity tour. Fortunately, Laurie had remained down-to-earth about his literary exploits. He announced that the arty beige corduroy jacket we was wearing had been purchased in great excitement on the day of the release of the hardback version of *The Gun Seller* commenting that: 'another novel and you're allowed a leather elbowpatch, 10 and you're allowed a black polo-neck'. He was clearly daunted by the prospect of having to read and talk to such an eager audience, or at least he was doing an impressive impression of much-loved English coyness in such a situation: he even went so far as to compare having to read from his book to speaking at the Nuremburg rally!

Apparently he initially began writing a film script but found it to be an 'ulcerous hell' of an experience. He had gone out and bought *Screenplay*, a

guide to writing film scripts by one Sid Field, only to find that the strict rules it set out were as intimidating as the bouncers outside *Back to Basics*. Not surprisingly, inspiration rapidly wilted like a red rose after Valentines Day. He then discovered that the examples that Field so readily drew upon were all from his own, 'as yet unpublished' script. Laurie compared the whole experience to learning to drive only to discover that the instructor doesn't know how to either and promptly gave up the script idea. So then the film became a novel in which 'there are no rules, no structure you have to obey. You can invent your rules and go with it'. This experience was a lot easier, and he genuinely loves his genre which must have helped: 'I am emotionally retarded. I love the whole world of espionage, I'm a real sucker for it'.

The question on everyone's lips is why Laurie's book is lacking the kind of rave comment from his cohort Stephen Fry that can be found attributed to Laurie on the back of *The Liar*. Laurie claimed not to have thought about it but suggested that perhaps Fry had read the book and flatly refused! Probably. The big scandal, he said, was that he had never composed the gushing comparison of Fry's writing to Joseph Heller. In fact, he had never said it in any context whatsoever: 'I never said that. I swear to God, that's totally untrue'. Everyone will be glad to know then that Fry's lack of comment is not to do with any weakening of the friendship between the duo. They stopped doing their sketch shows because they 'felt we never really

got it right, the sketch thing. Most sketch comedy depends on mimicking authority figures'. Once you get to the same age as the authority figures of course, mocking them becomes a little difficult.

The Laurie literary experience is a strange thing then. On the page it just doesn't live up to the expectations set by Fry's success, when Laurie reads aloud from it it is a little more bearable but this is obviously a rare experience. It's a shame because, as the whole of Great Britain knows, Hugh Laurie is a really decent chap and an excellent comic actor. **I**

The Gun Seller is available from Mandarin at £5.99

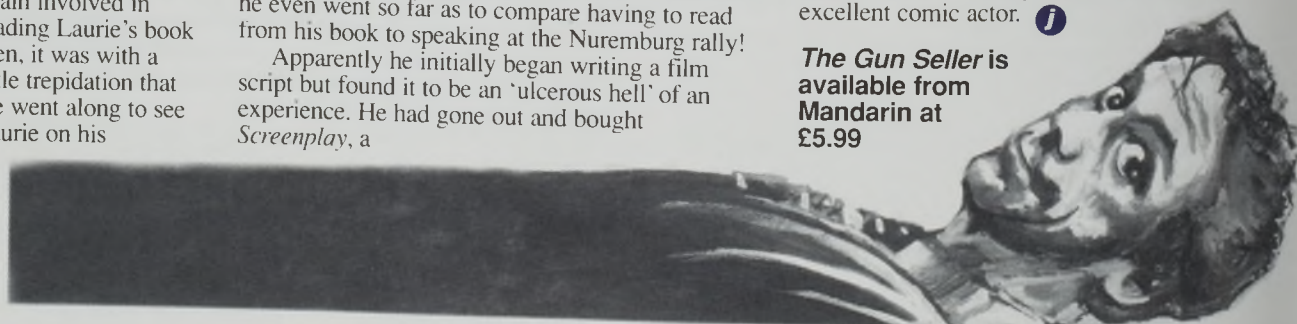


Illustration: Daniel Harness



STAR WARS

The Greatest Film Saga Of All Time?



This month's re-release of *Star Wars* is, for many of our generation, the most exciting piece of film news since they were born. It has already stormed to number one in the USA, and will without doubt do the same over here. Perhaps I should state here I am not bringing an objective view to proceedings; like many others, my childhood was dominated and dictated by *Star Wars* and its sequels.

But this is no piece of easy nostalgia - like the game of football, *Star Wars* has moved outside its origins to become a metaphor for life, indeed, a way of life. So, is it possible to sum up the appeal of *Star Wars* in so little space? Here goes... ►

Play boy

Small boys in the playground, garden canes for light sabres, climbing frames for Death Stars, isn't it? Hmmmm...I don't know about you, but my memories of childhood now seem to consist of a series of rather confused flashbacks, most of which centre around *Star Wars* and football.

In fact my only ambitions involved piloting the Millennium Falcon into the centre circle at Wembley, scoring a hat-trick for Chelsea in the Cup Final and defeating a few thousand storm troopers before going home for tea in front of *Dukes of Hazard*. Simple really.

Fifteen years later, with my *Star Wars* collection and small boys' Chelsea shirts long having been sent to the jumble sale (Cheers, mum), I may have to accept that, maybe, it's not going to happen. But that doesn't lessen the impact that six hours of celluloid has had on an entire generation. Whether it was being put in detention for poking Darth Vader (well, Stephen Hall) in the eye with a light saber (which was, in truth, quite a pathetic effort made out of a stick and some red paint) or seething with jealousy for hours on end when Mathew Fairbrass got the Millennium Falcon for Christmas, our every waking hour was spent arguing over the existence of real light sabers and who got to be Han Solo (all the coolest kids wanted to be Han Solo, Luke being seen as a bit of a wet git round our way). The re-releases bring all manner of memories flooding back but nothing can match the thrill of seeing *Return of the Jedi* on the big screen for the first time. In these media hungry days, every other day there is a film, band or a television programme claiming to be representative of a generation. For *Star Wars* this isn't merely an idle boast, but a simple fact. Whereas kids of the seventies had their Choppers and the kids of today have their Playstations, we had the *Star Wars* trilogy and it has pervaded our lives in a way that no

other film has done, or is ever likely to.



The Greatest Film Saga Of All Time? CONTINUED FROM P

First, to the re-released version. The effects have been reputedly jazzed up to suit the image-conscious nineties (as well as being a smart marketing stunt - will you buy the new editions?). Is it really necessary?

Considering the first film was completed in 1977, there are remarkably few examples of bad taste pastels and flares. Only the lounge lizard music in Moss-Isley spaceport gives the odd twinge of shame, and some of the droids could have been made by *Blue Peter*. But the space battles and aliens stand up remarkably well: the producers realised that simplicity was the key to overcoming a lack of technology, and never tried anything too ambitious.

The feeling of speed in the final attack on the Death Star can still make you duck and weave like Bruno, and they'll still a way to go before we can sit and giggle at the plasticene aliens as we do with *Sinbad* films.

Away from the collectable figures and Internet culture that surrounds *Star Wars*, we're left with the film. From the opening scene there is tension: a monolithic starship dwarfing Princess Leia's diplomatic craft, a gun battle, and then the entrance of Darth Vader. The command that this asthmatic warlord has over the screen doesn't let up for the next nine hours of the trilogy, and his first appearance is evil majesty at its best. Waiting until the lowly soldiers have given their lives before him, he strides into the corridor, kicking stray bodies from his path, surveying all before him. Not even Robert de Niro at his satanic best can hope to compete with the dark side of the force.

The *Star Wars* trilogy are the

ultimate example of how to structure a film in sequels. The workings of modern Hollywood dictate that each film in a series must work equally well on their own: *Lethal Weapon*, *Alien*, even the masterful *Godfather* trilogy all have plots that only nod in the direction of the following films.

But George Lucas' creation sprawls over nine hours of complete narrative unity. The plot progresses slowly but surely: by the end of *Star Wars* we have only the vaguest knowledge of the workings of this universe in turmoil. Why does Han Solo owe money? Who is Luke's father? Why has Ben Kenobi effectively killed himself? And, above all, who will win? The *Empire Strikes Back* is a rarity in Hollywood, a film with an unhappy ending: the Empire triumphant and Han Solo on ice. But the leisurely pace does not automatically mean that the films drag on in unnecessary depth: the three-way finale of *Return of the Jedi* is an unprecedented piece of cinematic excitement, switching breathlessly between the tense battle between Luke and the Emperor to the all-out blasting of the final Death Star attack. It is the three film structure that allows the film its sub-plots, dead ends and enormous cast of characters, and its subsequent phenomenal appeal.

And there's going to be more: Fox have announced that filming will begin in England for three prequels this year. Six-part films have previously only been the domain of schlock horror (*Friday the 13th*) or soft-porn (*Emmanuelle*), usually leading to an instant loss of credibility and quality. It says a lot about the enduring nature of *Star Wars* that these will be the most eagerly awaited films since *Jurassic Park*.

The real skill of *Star Wars* is to distill all of humanity into one piece of celluloid. The characters may be far, far away, but they've got real concerns: political bullying by a Stalinist dictator, adolescent unrest, even crop failure. Even in a planet that is at "the furthest point from the bright centre of the universe," Tatooine, there lives a collection of hooded dodgy car salesmen, the Jawas. The bar at Moss-Isley is eerily reminiscent of many city-centre pubs in Leeds: "a wretched hive of scum and villainy." The sheer spectrum of life on offer shames efforts like *Star Trek*, where other life forms have mutated foreheads and little else. We all know a Han Solo, even if we don't really want to.

But it's in the fight between good and evil that *Star Wars* is the real winner. The idea of a metaphysical force that determines all things has been around since Matthew, Mark, Luke and John first put pen to paper. But, much as the bible is a good read, it just doesn't have the style. Avoiding temptation by Satan, becoming at one with your environment and treating all men as equal are all cornerstones of every religion. What better way to educate your children in the paths of



Owen Gibson

THE FORCE OF FUZZ

For many, the *Star Wars* trilogy is just a bit of fun which hits the right nostalgia buttons and occasionally demands such behaviour as putting a bucket on your head, waving a stick around (while making swooshing noises, of course) and saying stuff like "Luke, I am your father" in a really deep voice. For some, however, these movies represent a deeply relevant cultural phenomenon, a zeitgeist - nay, a universally mythologising discourse which acts as a bonding social force for generations X through Z.



But neither of these interpretations is correct. Rather, *Star Wars*, at least parts I through VI is quite simply a trichophilic diatribe. Or, to put it more simply, it is all about hair. And fur. Fuzzy stuff in general, if you like.

Just take a look at the Good Guys. Luke, Han, Obi Wan and Lando all have healthy heads of hair and, in some cases, fine, manly beards and moustache's. Leia, while conspicuously beardless, has long, shiny, flowing locks all the way down her back, which she often ties into various silly shapes (leading to numerous predictable jokes about Danish pastries). The droids are hairless, yes, but they don't even have skin, and Yoda doesn't really count because he's a Muppet. But as for Chewbacca... talk about hair city, suburb and all surrounding localities.

On the flip side - or, to be more accurate, the Dark Side - The Empire is characterised by severe crops and sensible hair which doesn't get too hot under Stormtrooper helmets. This kind of hair encourages a sense of discipline; would the Imperial troops have taken the Grand Moff Tarkin so seriously if he'd had a pony tail or afro? I think *not*.

More importantly, however, the Bad Guy in *Star Wars* is, more often than not, the bald guy. Darth Vader: bald. Emperor Palpatine: bald. Jabba the Hutt: bald. Boba Fett: bald (probably). If George Lucas' presentation of things is to be believed, then anyone would think that baldness equates with extreme evilness. And that is the crux of the matter.

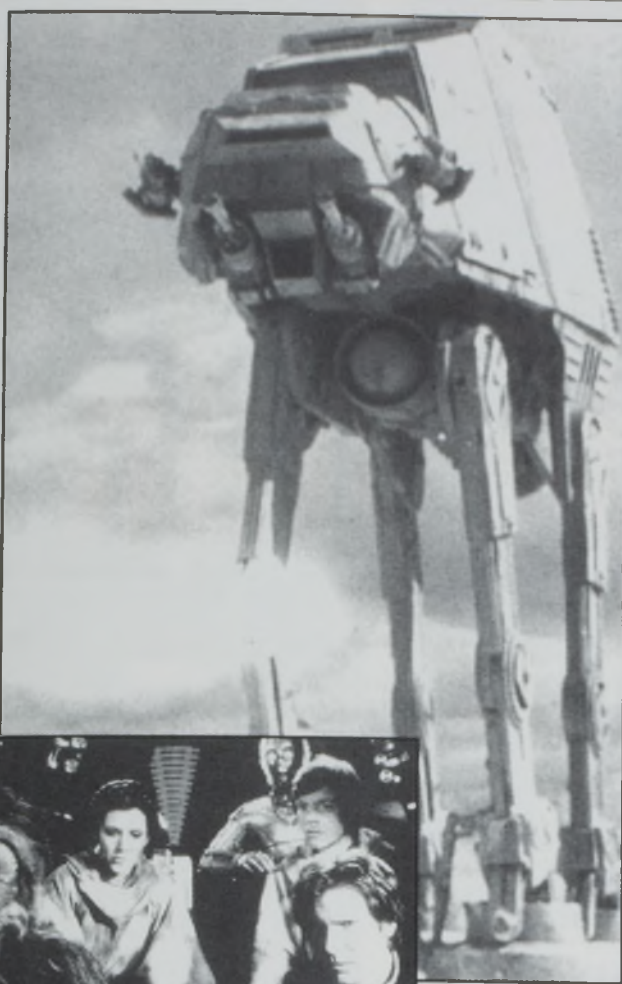
Look at Lucas. He is remarkably hirsute. His beard seems

quite uncontrollable and his hair is all over the place. Literally. Indeed, a lesser known subsidiary of Lucasfilm is Lucasfilm, responsible for the manufacture of rugs, coats, muffs and even thermal underwear, all made from follicles shed by the man himself. He worships hair as if it were his God. Associates have even claimed, in whispered tones, that he actually *feels physical pain* when it is cut.

It's understandable, then, that this magnum opus reflects his one, true passion. It is both symbolically and visually prevalent throughout the plot. We begin with the old Republic, hairy and good. Then, as the Empire rises, a severe outbreak of alopecia seems to occur, and the benevolent tresses are discarded, thrown to the wind by the barberous Dark Side. Evil rules with iron shears and clippers made of twisted, blackened metal. The Jedi hero, Anakin Skywalker loses his lovely locks as his soul is corrupted, and his conversion to evil is complete only once his scalp is bare. Then he re-emerges as Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith. Remember: Less hair, more evil. This is the Golden Rule of the *Star Wars* saga.

It's all there, and it's not even as if you have to read between the lines to notice it. Forget *The Force*, the all-embracing power behind existence in Lucas' universe is the stuff you have to wrench out of the bath plug-hole every few months or stop it getting blocked. So if you truly want to celebrate the imminent *Star Wars* re-release, then do it the way George would want you to. Don't shave your face, legs or armpits. Don't cut your hair - let it all hang out, or tie it into vaguely amusing shapes. And, to use a shamelessly bad pun, may the fuzz be with you.

Dan Jolin



righteousness than with a movie with explosions and everything. And for PC adults, the film allows you to adhere to a pure form of nationalism. You can take political sides without ever feeling guilty, or sorry for the other guys. Best of all, the good guys are not simply pseudo-Americans - well, not too obviously. At least the President doesn't take flight to try and save the rebellion...

For a film that relies on the symbolism of good and evil for its motivation, the characters are superb. Even the wet Luke Skywalker ends *Return of the Jedi* a true war hero, all memories of Aunt Buroo and his farming childhood desolved as he takes his place as a Jedi Knight. There are, however, two unlikely heroes, the droids. The love/hate relationship between C3-PO and R2-D2 provides moments of much-needed comedy among the ding-dong metaphysical battling. 3PO's fussy Englishman act reprises the role of Bilbo Baggins, an unwilling adventurer who'd much rather be at home with a nice cup of Castrol. He is drippingly obsequious to anyone who shows the slightest bit of authority, and never fails to drop R2 in it if it will keep himself out of trouble. R2-D2 is an amazing cinematic feat, a character who manages to emit more emotions through a series of beeps than many Oscar winning Hollywood actors (Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump* for example). There's the low moan when he hears the Jawas approaching, the excited squealing when he spots trouble, and the cheeky melodious ribbing of his robot chum. But they love each other really: the best film couple since Estaire and Rogers.

The music must be mentioned: gothic and haunting where necessary, triumphant at the right times, and always unobtrusive. The theme tune has entered the national psyche as only the *Superman* and *Jaws* themes have done since: a valedictory salute to the good side of the force.

Like with any mass cultural phenomenon, there are legions of self-appointed spokesmen who tell us that *Star Wars* is a watered down fairy tale for the simple-minded. *Star Wars* hating is an affection for the terminally intellectual last week *The Guardian* even wheeled out Quentin Crisp for their obligatory "why I hate *Star Wars*" piece. This is a futile piece of sixth-form bullying, tantamount to calling Eric Clapton a better guitarist than Sid Vicious. *Star Wars* goes way, way beyond such trivialities: it is something to savour, not savage. Writing about the film is a perfect example of that age-old joke - you may as well sing about architecture.

Milton began his interstellar epic *Paradise Lost* with the words "Of man's first disobedience..." You won't get the likes of Quentin Crisp crossing swords with such a literary heavyweight, but for millions of star-crossed film-goers those words mean nothing. The real story of man's first disobedience and the titanic battle between good and evil begins with the words "In a galaxy far far away..." And it's got a better ending. If you haven't seen it, then make sure you do.





Obi-Wan Kenobi is the classic good guy of modern cinema. Paul Wilson and Jim Biswell speak exclusively to Sir Alec Guinness about the power of the Force



gentleman jeedi

Following the capture of the Millennium Falcon by tractor beam, Luke, Han, Chewy and Obi-Wan are trapped on the Death Star. Princess Leia is holed up on the detention levels - she needs rescuing and they have to get away soon.

Obi-Wan decides that he must disable the tractor beam alone, while Solo and Skywalker rescue the Princess. An eager and foolhardy Luke faces Obi-Wan and insists that he accompany the old man on his dangerous mission. He declines

"But I want to come with you!", says a clearly disappointed Luke.

"Your destiny lies on a different path than mine," replies the Jedi Master. He looks directly at Luke.

"The force will be with you. Always."

With that line, Sir Alec Guinness sealed a place in the affections of anyone who saw him as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*. And that is a lot of people. Indeed, for most moviegoers aged 30 and under, Sir Alec is remembered solely for his work in George Lucas' masterpiece and (briefly) its sequels. His musings on the way of the Force have become some of the most famous and oft-repeated quotes in film history, reinforcing the mysterious legend that seems to surround the *Star Wars* universe.

If however, your knowledge of the arts stretches beyond the fact that the Jawa's guns are in fact Lee-Enfield rifles with bean tins stuck on the end, or you can acknowledge that the entire world of drama does not revolve uniquely around the aftermath of the Clone Wars, then you will know that Sir Alec Guinness is one of the finest actors these islands have ever produced.

Fast approaching his 83rd birthday this April, Sir Alec has, contrary to popular belief, not retired. His unbilled cameo in last year's British thriller *Mute Witness* means that his career has now spanned more than 60 years in stage and screen, since his appearance in *Libel* at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith in 1933.

Yet despite his work seeing him move from stage to screen and back again with none of the difficulties actors sometimes associate with such transitions, he clearly has a favourite medium.

"My path has always been, first and foremost, the theatre," says Guinness, "partly because one was glamourised by the other, and partly because I prefer the life of the theatre."

It is quite plain from the manner in which he holds the unique way of life that the demands of its protagonists.

"I like rehearsing in the daytime, I like the evening and being with people week in and week out. They know each other, there is a cohesion that you rarely get in films, where you perhaps only see three people a day. People come and go, but the relationships are there."

Despite this blatant preference for all things stage, Guinness has a stage career which has seen him play Hamlet (direct once), Shylock, Richard III and Richard II. His credentials are no less impressive.

A six-time collaboration with the legendary director Laurence Olivier saw Sir Alec make his film debut in *Richard III* (1946) and grow in stature as a film actor. His highpoint in 1957 with his Oscar-winning performance as the lip-smacking Colonel Nicholson in the magnificent *Bridge on the River Kwai*. The final scenes, in which he attempts to blow up the infamous bridge, are an attempt to blow up the infamous bridge himself, ranks as one of the best endings in film history.

On the evidence of this and his other work, it is no surprise that the camera comes easily to Sir Alec. It may be in the smallest village hall or in the biggest block of flats, overcoming the obvious technical difficulties of the two realms apart, but he himself sees it as a matter of course.

"Personally, I don't find any difference between the two."

'It's mean and hard of me, but I am resolved to keep the bin unopened. I'm afraid I no longer have the strength to open it.'



theatre," he says.
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acting truly, without showing off, it is exactly the same in the theatre as it is for film and TV. You recognise immediately beautiful acting in any of these forms and they are all the same."

Quite how playing eight members of the d'Ascoyne family in the Ealing comedy *Kind Hearts And Coronets* can be the same as the role of George Smiley in John Le Carre's *Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy* for the BBC is hard to comprehend, but the nature of Sir Alec's career has been such that he has played across the spectrum from high comedy to Shakespearean tragedy. A CV like his must surely contain some favourite roles that stand out from the rest.

"I've always had a penchant for small parts," he smiles wryly, "because I don't feel so responsible for the whole thing."

So when he first read Lucas' little sci-fi script on the set of *Murder By Death* in 1975, he could not have anticipated the recognition that would come with the small part of Obi-Wan Kenobi. Acclaim from his peers and self-satisfaction from his work is more important to Sir Alec than being the highly paid movie star that so many in his profession strive to be, so despite receiving two and a half percent of *Star Wars*' gross take - "two thirds goes to the Inland Revenue," he confesses nonchalantly - the film has been both a blessing and burden.

"I'm very grateful for films, it's allowed me to do certain films, but I've made a lot of rubbish of course. *Star Wars* has meant that I can live for the rest of my life in the reasonably modest way I am now used to.

"It's mean and hard of me, but I am resolved to throw the photographs from *Star Wars* fans demanding autographs in the bin unopened. I'm afraid I no longer have the energy to assist teenagers in their idiotic, albeit lucrative, hobby."

However, he has nothing but praise for the film's director.



"Like all the best directors Lucas had very little to say during the actual filming. It was almost like being on stage: good actors don't like being told how to act. In his reliance on both his ear and his eye, he reminded me of the young David Lean. Lucas is completely wrapped up in the cinema."

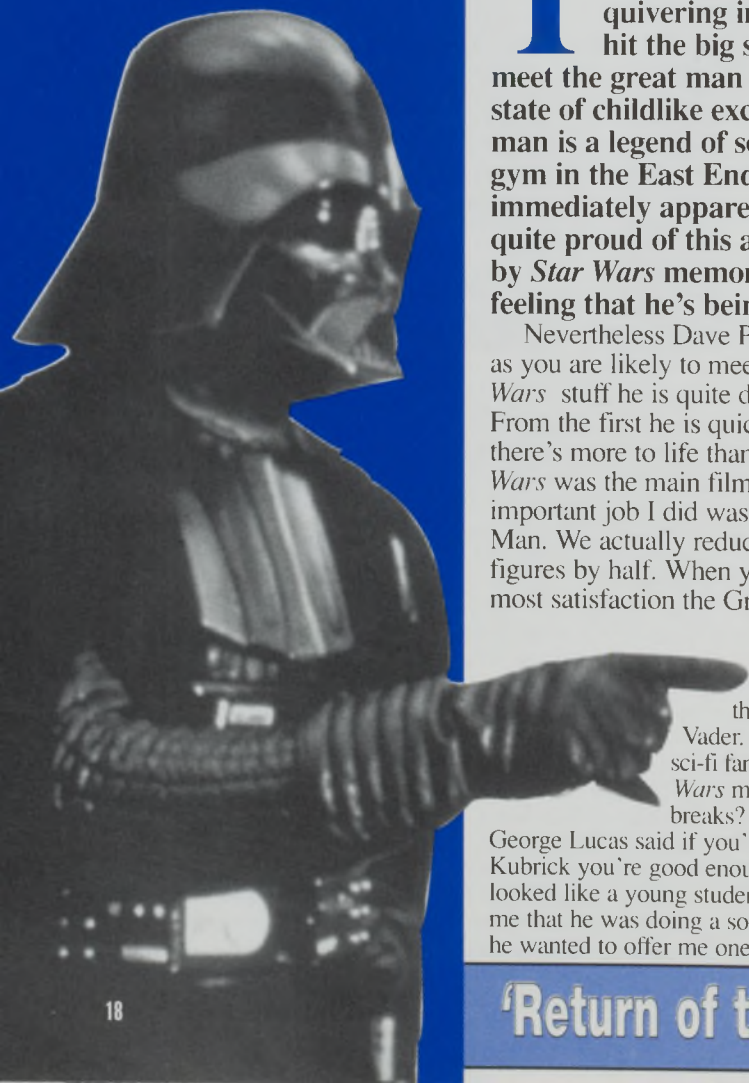
In casting him in the role of Kenobi, Lucas ensured that Sir Alec would be wrapped up in the *Star Wars* phenomenon whether he liked it or not. He added clout to the project during production that someone of his stature demands, and made his portrayal of the 'mystical mentor' the definitive version. Conspiracy theorists may like to note at this point that Sir Alec himself had someone in his life who he referred to as his "guide and mentor", Sir Sydney Cockerell. Could this be the reason why his Obi-Wan seemed to have such a presence in what is essentially a supporting role, that he saw something of Sir Sydney in the wise old Jedi Master?

Rumours also abound concerning Sir Alec's presence in the upcoming *Star Wars* prequels. It was said that a digitally younger version of him would take a starring role, or that Kenneth Branagh was to step into the big hooded cloak. As for the man himself, he told *The Times* that "even if asked, I would not appear in any more *Star Wars* films." More's the pity. **i**

row the photographs from *Star Wars* fans demanding autographs in
 e energy to assist teenagers in their idiotic, albeit lucrative, hobby.' 17



As the evil lord
Darth Vader,
David Prowse
brought
menace into the
hearts of
millions.
JUSTIN
PENROSE
meets the man
behind the
mask...



use the force

The character of Darth Vader had cinema audiences in awe and kids quivering in their boots when he hit the big screen in 1977. About to meet the great man I found myself in a state of childlike excitement - after all, this man is a legend of sorts. Upon entering his gym in the East End of London it is immediately apparent that Dave Prowse is quite proud of this accolade. Surrounded by *Star Wars* memorabilia one can't help feeling that he's being a tad indulgent.

Nevertheless Dave Prowse is as affable a person as you are likely to meet. Indeed, for all the *Star Wars* stuff he is quite down to earth about it all. From the first he is quick to make it clear that there's more to life than Mr Vader. "Although *Star Wars* was the main film role I ever had, the most important job I did was the Green Cross Code Man. We actually reduced the road accident figures by half. When you ask which job gave the most satisfaction the Green Cross Code wins

hands down every time."

Although this may be the case most people remember the dark and powerful figure of Vader. Moreover, it would be most sci-fi fanatics dream to appear in a *Star Wars* movie but how do you get those breaks? "After a *Clockwork Orange*

George Lucas said if you're good enough for Stanley Kubrick you're good enough for me. I thought that he looked like a young student just out of college. He told me that he was doing a sort of space fantasy movie and he wanted to offer me one of two parts. One was

Chewbacca, and I said what's that George and he said it's a big hairy gorilla who goes through the film on the side of the goodies. I thought oh shit, imagining three months inside a gorilla skin, and said I don't really fancy that much George what's the other? It's the big villain of the film, he replied, a character called Darth Vader. I said don't tell me any more I'll take that part thank you very much, as you always remember the baddies. George said I think you've made a very wise choice because nobody will ever forget Darth Vader and here we are 20 years later."

Nevertheless appearing in one of the greatest trilogies of all time isn't always what it's cracked up to be. After being led to believe that Lucasfilm were going to use his voice they dramatically chose to use James Earl Jones' at the last minute. "I was very upset about that actually." Prowse claims before back tracking, "Well not very upset, but it was just one of those things. This happens within the film business. When you take on a film role you virtually sign your life away. They're given carte blanche to do anything that they please with it. The thing was that I had to learn all the lines and say them so I automatically assumed that, although my voice wasn't coming through the mask for production purposes, they were going to reproduce my voice in the studio."

Such is the problem of being a pawn of the film industry. However, Prowse's conflict with Lucasfilm bosses was only at the beginning of its slippery slope. Having played the character for seven years he was faced with the body blow that they were not going to allow him to play Vader's death at the end of *Return of the Jedi*.

"That was the real choker because having played the part of Vader for seven years I'd received sufficient publicity for people to know who Dave Prowse was and what I looked like and then of course when they go and unmask Darth Vader there's somebody who looks like Humpty Dumpty, like a benign, little, fat old man. Everyone was saying 'how come this big powerful actor

'Return of the Jedi was a horrible film to work on. It wa



David Prowse reflects on the past
Pic: Willem Jaspert

like Dave Prowse looks like Humpty Dumpty. I think it was a silly move really."

Most people in Prowse's position would probably voice their dissatisfaction in harsher terms to say the least. Indeed, it seems strange that Prowse was dealt with such an iron hand by Lucas. "The thing is that when you're in the film industry the directors and producers can do as they please and they just decided that they didn't want me to get into too strong a negotiating position for future movies. It was just a move to stop me really. If I had been seen as Anakin Skywalker it would have put me in a very strong negotiating position for the future films and that was what they didn't want."

It would be futile to judge Lucas after only hearing Prowse's side of the argument yet one can not help feeling a little aggrieved for him. Moreover the injustices do not end there. "When *The Empire Strikes Back* came out press kits went out with biographies on everybody in the movie except Darth Vader. I had a real up and downer with them and they said 'Oh sorry we've made a terrible mistake' and I said it's not a mistake you've done it on purpose. The idea was that they were trying to preserve the anonymity of Darth Vader while I was trying to get as much publicity for myself for playing what was now widely accepted as the ultimate screen villain of all time. I wanted recognition for what I'd done."

Rightly so one would have to say. It seems a little petty almost that the powers that be in Lucasfilm were so intent on putting Prowse in his place. Indeed, even going to the extremes of denying him an accolade that he ultimately deserved. After winning the Oscar for best costumes Prowse was disallowed the honour of parading his famous suit on stage. "That really pissed me off. They flew C3PO over to America and dressed some big guy up as Darth Vader."

It is a baffling sequence of events but Prowse is philosophical about the unfairness of it all: "I felt wronged in all sorts of different ways for no fault of my own, but it's just one of those things. You can't do anything about it. If you keep on worrying about it it just goes on and on and festers. Eventually it would just eat you up. I'd like to make my peace with George though and I'd like to think they'd do the honourable thing and offer me the part of Vader in episodes two and three of the new trilogy." Mmm, perhaps this is a false hope considering that he

admits in a jovial manner that he hasn't spoken to Lucas since *Return of the Jedi*.

Nevertheless Prowse continues to hold onto the hope that there could possibly be one last hurrah. After all, playing Darth Vader at conventions has pretty much taken over his life in recent years. It seems he is split between feeling desperately aggrieved at the unhappy end to the last trilogy, while desperately hoping that the man who pulls the strings at Lucasfilm will show some pity and give him the role he would love. When the subject of *Star Wars* the movie is breached his face lights up at the great memories aroused. "There was a lovely atmosphere on the set. Everyone from Sir Alec Guinness to Peter Cushing to R2D2 were very sociable. We'd sit around when we weren't filming and Sir Alec for instance would say come on let's go and have a practice on our sword dual and off we'd go next door with a couple of pieces of stick and practice, Mark Hamill likewise."

The bright look of contemplative satisfaction disappears when the topic of the final film is opened: "*Return of the Jedi* was a horrible film to work on. It was the worst film that I've ever been on in my life with all of the problems we had. They were paranoid about secrecy, they were frightened to

death that someone was giving information to the press. I got accused of it myself which was ironic considering I didn't know what was going on. I didn't have a copy of the script, all I got were my pages and I had no idea where they fitted into the film. I just had to learn my lines the night before and deliver them the following day. I found out from the *Daily Mail* that Darth Vader was being killed off and all these sorts of things. I went back to Lucasfilm to confront them with it but unfortunately the *Daily Mail* article had come out and it said 'exclusive interview with Dave Prowse'. It looked as though I'd given them all of the information which of course I hadn't."

This dichotomy in Prowse's attitude towards the whole *Star Wars* thing is perhaps understandable. Having faced such apparent injustices would be enough to frustrate the most relaxed person. Indeed, it is as though Prowse is attempting to suppress that anger that could so easily be released. Nevertheless, as his own case proves, there is little that you can do to touch those at the top. After playing one of the most powerful characters of all time Prowse is left with the prospect of never being part of the new *Star Wars* world. A feeling of forcelessness is all that is left. **j**



the worst film I've ever been on in my life with all of the problems we had'

forceful fantasy



Star Wars may have had cinemagoers pinned to their seats but was it a good thing for Science Fiction as a whole? FAISAL QURESHI talks to a few experts

There has always been a tense relationship between the Science Fiction community and *Star Wars*. Ask a serious Science Fiction reader about *Star Wars* and they would tell you it is NOT SF. It's just a laughable attempt at space opera, but the success of the film could not be ignored.

For many people, *Star Wars* had become SF. Now with a series of books and other spin-offs set in the *Star Wars* universe, the question was asked: what has been *Star Wars* effect on Science Fiction?

"It had a disastrous effect," answered David Pringle, editor of the UK's only SF magazine, *Interzone*. "Not in it, as itself, but along with *Star Trek* and all the films that have come since *Star Wars*, it has turned SF from a literary medium to a visual medium."

Undoubtedly, *Star Wars* had been influenced by a lot of SF literature. From the adventures of Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon (which Lucas originally wanted to make) to Frank Herbert's *Dune* and Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings*. Along the way, there were various historical parallels in the trilogy, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the overthrow of the Knight Templars. There was also sizable input from Joseph Campbell's influential text *Hero Of A Thousand Faces*, a study of myths and legends throughout human history, but what was the reaction to the final mix?

"*Star Wars* was garbage," exclaims Terry Pratchett, author of the best selling *Discworld* novels, "very, very ancient garbage that had been beautifully cooked. It was godawfully impressive to my generation because, with the honourable exception of *2001* up until that point the portrayal of spaceships on the screen had been a game of search for the string. Its lasting appeal is because it

stuck to the ancient hidden prince with magic sword beats Dark Lord format, which always strikes a chord. There are worse stories it could have stolen."

"I felt *Star Wars* was a wonderful fantasy film, on a par with *The Wizard Of Oz*," commented Joe Haldeman, award-winning author of *The Forever War* "but the misperception of it as Science Fiction has been disastrous to the field," Surprisingly, George Lucas would agree with him on the point that *Star Wars* was a fantasy, not SF.

SF is a broad literary category. It can encompass the technolove works of Arthur C Clarke and Asimov to the more character led stories of Ursula K LeGuin and Kurt Vonnegut. In SF there are various sub-genres, *Star Wars* would fall into Space Opera. Serious SF critics considered it as a pastiche of what was common in the genre, cliches and all.

"I have nothing much in the way of opinion of *Star Wars*. Except that the first one was a compendium of other peoples ideas unsuccessfully resolved," said Michael Moorcock, controversial author of books like *Behold The Man* and the *Eternal Champion* sagas. He was one of the initial few who castigated *Star Wars* when it was first released.

"I've never been interested in that type of SF," he continued, "and I'm sad that it has come to dominate the public's idea to what SF is. It has also defined SF for the commercial world, so that endless clones of clones are perpetually regurgitated. It's probably done irreparable harm to the earnings of ambitious, literary SF writers and I suspect it has marginalised many where they were once fairly well-known."

explains: "A lot of the potential audience for spin up in an atmosphere saturated with media can't be blamed for thinking that's what SF really is. 'What's this odd stuff without any wookies or Death Stars?'"

Terry Pratchett disagreed: "Sure it told the world that SF is guys with ray guns running around like medieval idiots, but since



the world generally believed that anyway, I don't think it did much harm. Maybe it got some kids reading real SF."

Rich Handley, a *Star Wars* comic collector and now one of the many writers who contribute stories set in Lucas' universe defended *Star Wars* from its critics: "The best SF is about people. It doesn't matter what the setting is, or what species the characters are or what world their on. What matters that the character and storyline be enjoyable and relatable, that we be able to see beyond the sci-fi trapping and care about what were reading."

As to the accusation that *Star* ruined SF, Kevin J. Anderson, author of the Jedi Academy books retorted: "I think its complete bunk! The *Star Wars* (and *Star Trek* etc) books and media properties have vastly increased interest in SF among the overall public; SF books sell better then ever before," he continues, "I get a large amount of fan mail, particularly from younger readers, who have never liked reading before they got into reading *Star Wars* novels, and many of them go on to read my other novels, and then other SF."

Now with *Star Wars* once again reclaiming the top world wide box office seat from *ET*, it now seems here to stay. What are writer's reaction to the re-releases?

F Paul Wilson, best selling horror writer, gave his assessment to *Leeds Student*: "It's like visiting old friends. I haven't seen it for years and was surprised at how much time is spent on character development. In memory it was a headlong action-fest, but the first half has a rather leisurely pace."

But with it still to be released in the UK, Dave Pringle's reaction was much more cautious. "Not so much running but I will be interested to see them to see what they've added. It has been 20 years. They are trying to sell them to a kid audience who were not around at the first releases." **i**

R2D2 - Kenny Baker

I just happened to be in the right place. George was looking for a little person and I was around town and I went for an audition and they said he'll do and that was it. I mean, you don't have to act. It's just sitting inside a robot. I'm not really an actor, I'm more of an entertainer. I do a variety act. Play harmonica, tell a few gags, sing a few songs mainly. I didn't want to do *Star Wars* at the time. Didn't want to be stuck in a robot in the summer.

I used to hang around for weeks and weeks on the set and didn't do a stroke. They also used to use the remote control robot which could move a lot quicker than me and was good for the chases.

At the time everyone thought the film was a load of rubbish. What's it all about? All these wonderful names we couldn't get our tongues wrapped round and we all thought what a load of rubbish this is, George is going to lose his shirt on this. Then I thought Alec Guinness wouldn't put his



name to a load of rubbish, would he? I mean, Alec Guinness is like an icon isn't he? And to be involved with a science fiction cowboys and indians is like 'what the heck is he doing'?! You think of Alec Guinness as, not exactly Shakespeare, but as an English classical actor. Nice chap as well.

Carrie was a nice girl too. At the time she was a bit spaced out on drink and mild drugs. She was a lovely lady anyway, nice girl so what the heck.

We might be involved in the next film but we don't know yet. They're still fishing around for someone to play Han Solo and Mark Hamill's part and Carrie Fisher's part. They've got to get younger people because the originals have all grown older. That's the beauty of being a robot.

i Interview by Chris Hamilton

Boba Fett - Jeremy Bulloch

"I saw *Star Wars* when it came out, in the first week. I took my boys and we saw it and thought, 'Boy. This is terrific! It had a story as well, it wasn't just explosions and people fighting. There was a true theme running throughout. The talk then when it first came out, 'Oh, there's going to be a sequel'.

I never think sequels work. There have been a lot like *Jaws II*, its appalling. But *Star Wars II* wasn't *Star Wars II*, it was *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The first time that I walked onto the set in the Boba Fett suit, you could certainly see peoples heads turn. I could hardly see through this mask, and you had to look down at your feet to see where you were walking.

Acting in the suit was okay. Boba Fett is supposed to be quite cool, so they told me. You could stand still and say the lines. So for remembering lines it was one of the easiest jobs in the world. The

recognition I've had since has been amazing, and recently with the comic books, overwhelming.

I think part of the reason for Boba Fett's popularity is that the costume is fantastic, and also there's a mystery about him, people still don't know much about him.

I'd like to have appeared a bit more than I did, but that's life. I didn't write a script, I didn't suddenly turn around and say 'How dare I finish so early in the film'. I was just pleased to be part of the trilogy. And now he's been resurrected in *Star Wars*, just a brief appearance with Jabba The Hutt, but it's nice to know he's in all three." **i**

i Interview by Faisal Qureshi

Wicket - Warwick Davis

"There was an advert for extras and I went along. I was 2'11" at the time and they said 'great you can play one of the Ewoks.' I started as one of the extras but George Lucas noticed the way I handled the character and asked if I wanted to play the part of Wicket.

I think George noticed liked the childlike innocence of the way I played the role. I also had one of the cuter Ewok suits which was a bonus.

It was great. It was sort of a double life rubbing shoulders with all of these stars and then going back to school and having everyone ask me 'what was Carrie Fisher like.

Carrie used to feel sorry for me in my exceedingly hot suit and bring me cookies and milk in the breaks. Mark Hamill was great as well, he had a friend at Kenner toys and asked me which ones I wanted. The next day he walked in with the Millennium Falcon and tons of figures.

Part of the reason I carried on to do the Ewok movies was that

George's daughter's favourite character was Wicket. It was funny actually, I was invited along to her fourth Birthday party and was asked to dress up in the suit. It was ninety degrees and I was boiling in the thing. I carried the cake down to the pool and all the kids cheered, while the eyes of the suit steamed up and I considered diving into the pool. Meanwhile all the kids were feeding Wicket and the costume was filling up with cake. It's great though to have memories like that to look back on.

I've been offered a part in the new prequels but I don't know what it is yet as George is still working on the script. I've spoken to Rick McCallum about it and he said that it's going to be a touching film based around Anakin Skywalker and the two droids. It will be a lovely tale but I'm sure all of the great special effects will be there." **i**

i Interview by Justin Penrose 21



SLOWNESS
Milan Kundera
Faber & Faber, £5.99



A couple, the narrator and his spouse, decide to spend the night in a French castle. The castle was the primary location of a short book written before the French revolution about aristocratic French lovers at roughly the time of Laclos and his infamous Valmont.

This story dwells on the relaxed pace, the gentle exploitation of a whole night.

The narrator, hundreds of years later, projects onto the hotel, into the book, another love story, the tale of an etymologist and a secretary seducing each other, a tale which does not end as planned, partly due to the intervention of another couple whose story has slowly blossomed through the book into a full-blown argument. And alongside all this are an extrovert French philosopher and a Czech scientist.

These stories all come together then drift apart, letting each of the many protagonists, not least the readers, slowly look at what has just been experienced, what has been learnt. It is an appreciation of time and space told in a language packed with meaning and texture. More than that it is an appreciation of literature and life.

William Paton

Spike It

Chris Niles
MacMillan, £16.99

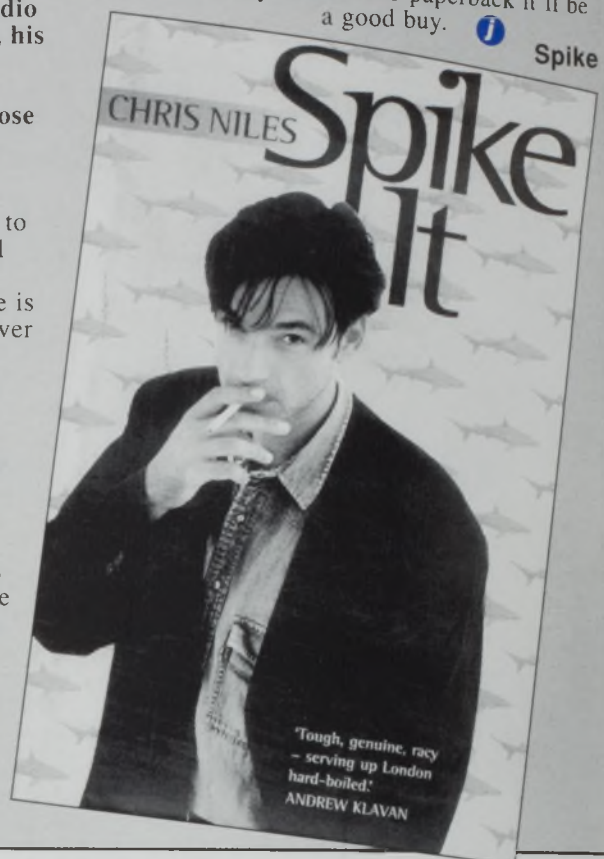
Here's the story: Sam Ridley the radio station's police reporter is a loser, his wife and son have left him, he's caning the old whisky, and in one of his stupors is told to investigate a murder close to his home. On returning to the radio station he mutters the F-word over the airwaves.

The upshot is that Sam Ridley is moved to Female FM where he has to cover the usual gamut of women's issues for a power mad woman boss. But oh no, not Sam Ridley, he is like a dog with a bone and just has to uncover the mystery of the murdered woman. This novel covers everything that has been done before but unlike a lot of hack/ journo/ investigator books, this is refreshing.

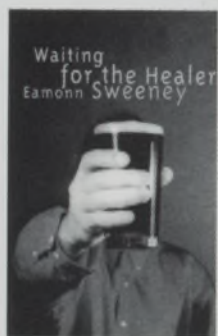
You have to feel for Sam because on the one side he is an archetypal bloke who is used and abused and a total Billy no mates and on the other hand he has a gentle side and loves his son and his Renault and cares about justice. It only came as half a surprise therefore to find that the author of this first novel is a her.

There are lots of characters in the plot but they have been given just the right amount of word space to give an overall picture, it is gritty in places but still manages somehow to leave you feeling pretty good. Sam's character has been

optioned for the telly, which, should it reach fruition will make for an interesting series. Hopefully we will hear more of Chris Niles. At 17 quid for the hardback its a bit steep but when it finally makes it to paperback it'll be a good buy.



WAITING FOR THE HEALER
Eamonn Sweeney
Picador, £14.99



Paul Kelly is an alcoholic, continually skirting the edge of self destruction after the tragic death of his wife. Forced to return to Ireland for the funeral of his murdered brother, he is quickly immersed in the tight community of Rathbawn, and is dragged into a wild plot to avenge his brother's death by local hardman,

Bumper O'Reilly.

This book charts Paul's internal struggle between the love that he has for his young daughter and his rapidly escalating alcoholism and despair as he struggles to come to terms with the horrific degradation and death of his much loved wife.

Waiting for the Healer is a truly excellent read which keeps you guessing until the very end. It is told in an energetic style that captures the very essence of a small Irish community where violence is the only way of gaining respect and the next pint is never far away. It thus has the capacity to be both amusing and profoundly disturbing with its gritty realism and vast array of characters who are both colourful and criminal and all play a part in enabling Paul to eventually come to terms with his past.

Helen Morrissey

A FINE BALANCE
Rohinton Mistry
Faber & Faber, £7.99



It is amazing that this book was nominated for the oh-so-prestigious Booker; it reminded me more of *Gone With The Wind* than, say, *Salman Rushdie*.

Although it is set in 1970s India, the background of political turmoil and personal trauma give the novel an aura of epic escapism reminiscent of Margaret Mitchell's old classic. However the point of the novel is of course to express the grim misery and suffering of the Indian people; it is not meant to be a glittering idealised romance. The background is one of horrific poverty against which four unhappy individuals struggle to survive, at a time when the Indian government has declared a 'State of Internal Emergency'. The atmosphere of desperation is strikingly and realistically convincing; it's just a bit bleak too.

To be more positive, this is an old-fashioned novel and an easy read. I found myself getting rather attached to the characters during the 600 pages of this book; I also thoroughly enjoyed not having to wrestle with the obscure symbolism and elusive narratorial technique so beloved of too much 20th century literature. So if you want to read something respected by the literati, yet actually comprehensible, don't be put off by my personal taste; it's worth a read.

Charlotte Heathcote

LOVE AND LONGING IN BOMBAY
Vikram Chandra
Faber & Faber, £12.99



This is a neat collection of inter-connected stories set in contemporary India, all recounted by a single narrator.

The challenge is to guess how they all interrelate! The stories are a description of many different lifestyles ranging from that of Sartaj, a police inspector who has to investigate a complicated murder case,

to Iqbal, a homosexual who is trying to trace his friend. Unfortunately this relationship is soon severed because the stories are so brief. Chandra offers a snapshot of their world and then moves on to somebody new.

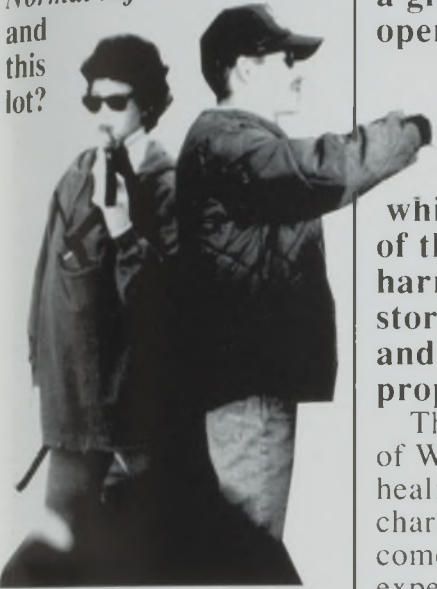
Chandra's style is passionate and absorbing and it draws you into the complex lives and personalities of his characters. The stories contain many Indian words which don't hinder its comprehension, but leaves you begging to know what a 'churidar' or a 'chatai' is (maybe I'm just one of the ignorant few!). As the title suggests, the book is essentially about the human struggle through life, but it is in no way depressing or bleak, rather more observational. At the end of 'Artha' Iqbal says "But life never does what it should," and this is the realisation of the stories as a whole.

Lucy Rutherford

Normal Life

Director: John McNorton
Stars: Luke Perry, Ashley Judd

Sex, drugs, murder violence, romance, the lot' promises Kate Burt-19 Magazine Will you get what is promised? Will the secret be revealed about the connection between *Normal Life* and this lot?



Although all these questions appear in the story about the cop Chris Anderson (Luke Perry) falling in love with Pam (Ashley Judd) you should not expect too much. It does not live up to its expectations as advertised.

Chris' relationship to the mentally ill Pam changes his life completely. The reason for Pam behaving strangely remains in the dark. You are left with some open questions but that does not make the film more interesting, even if the story, inspired by actual events, could make a gripping film.

The director (John McNorton) does not really manage to bring it over in an entertaining way. The presentation just leaves you with a description of a difficult relationship. If you are ready to see this end in disaster, it is, in a way, interesting to watch.

If you have nothing better to do, then watching *Normal Life* is no waste of money. However, if you are not inspired by a bad presentation of murder and violence and you find sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll more enjoyable, then you are better off going to a good party.

Joerg Harder



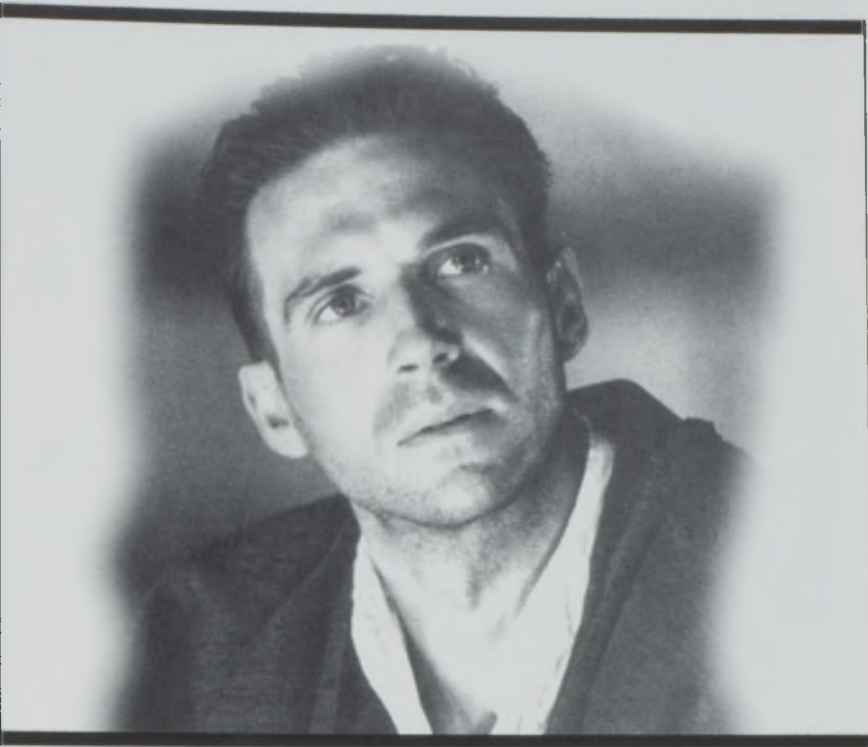
The English Patient

Director: Anthony Minghella
Stars: Ralph Fiennes, Willem Dafoe

An artist's brush slowly licks its way across the canvas, and an image gradually emerges. Then the rise and fall of infinite sand dunes across the desert comes into view, as if shot from a gliding plane. These opening pictures of *The English Patient*

preview the mosaic of images which is to bind the rest of the film, telling a harrowing, yet beautiful story of love, betrayal and war, in epic proportions.

The film is set at the end of WWII, revealing the healing processes of four characters who gradually come to terms with their experiences during the war. The past of the anonymous English patient (Ralph Fiennes) is unravelled during the film, and his tragic love



story comes to light.

What makes this film so special, and so mesmerising is not only the excellent acting, Juliette Binoche, Kristen Scott Thomas, and Willem Dafoe star, and the captivating cinematography of Tuscany and the Sahara, which will satiate scopophiliacs everywhere, but also the intelligence of the film. There are symbolic links throughout the film, such as the glass bottles hanging from the Egyptian healer, as well as those

in the garden of the nurse, Hana, in Tuscany - both healing the *English patient*. Minghella has built up a mass of images that play with the mind of the audience and linger there, creating the maze of the patient's memory.

It is difficult to stress quite how magical, Dante-esque and intriguing this film is. It is simply one of the most wonderful films this decade, and one by which you will be hypnotised. Like sand dunes across a desert. **i**

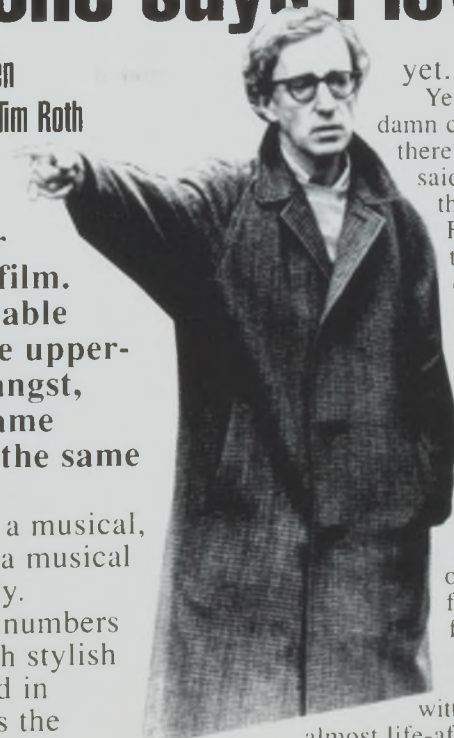
Clare Lister

Everyone says I love you

Director: Woody Allen
Stars: Goldie Hawn Tim Roth

Another Spring, another Woody Allen film. More comfortable neurosis, more upper-middle-class angst, more of the same characters in the same locations.

This year it's a musical, for God's sake, a musical romantic comedy. Schmaltzy '50s numbers interspersed with stylish locations, filmed in golden hues. It's the most self-indulgent thing I've ever seen,



yet...

Yet it's all so damn charming, and there's a lot to be said for charm these days.

Filmed in the three most charming cities in the world (New York, Paris, Venice).

'Everyone Says...' ignores any reality outside the director's own world of film buffs and forty-somethings, but its so

witty, clever, and almost life-affirming that it gets away with it; you sing

along, you laugh out loud, and you don't even mind that Goldie Hawn's in it. Yeah, Goldie Hawn.

Actresses previously thought only capable of vacuous Hollywood performances, like Hawn, and Julia Roberts, here become elegant screen goddesses. As with Allen's other female leads (Diane Keaton, Mia Farrow, and, especially, Mira Sorvino in last year's *Mighty Aphrodite*), the women here hog the screen, without having to uncross their legs, whilst the men, including Woody, are nervous wrecks.

The writer/director gets to snog both leading ladies, of course, (cue one hilarious post-coital moment between the diminutive Allen and the statuesque Roberts), but you forgive him - the sheer likeability of the thing is infectious.

Add to that a handful of young stars to die for (Lukas Haas, the divine Drew Barrymore, and Tim Roth), and you've got a sure-fire recipe for smiling. It'll really only be a hit with Allen fans, though. Go see and become one.



Fifty faces

CAPTURED BY



of Leeds

REEF
Live at LMUSU

Time was when Reef were going to do an interview, since January though they've become too famous for that sort of thing, so they must be good. To be honest I wasn't over-keen on Reef prior to tonight. Admittedly, their singles did have merit but what does Mr Stringer think he sounds like?

The love/hate debate gets put onto the back burner as the house lights go down and Reef saunter onto the stage. Half the crowd (female) screams; most of the rest (male) cheer and a handful at the front get squashed.

Looking for all the world like Marti Pellow's twin brother, Gary grabs the mic, glances about and LMU hits maximum overdrive as Reef go into orbit.

Any lingering doubts are blown away: Reef are a very coherent, energetic and perhaps most of all fun band. Gary is the perfect front man for them, jumping about the stage, the little faces in the crowd follow him as he climbs up next to the speakers, leans over the barrier and shakes their hands (OK, so this is a weeny bit patronising). The young age probably goes some way to explain why Gary taking off his waistcoat provokes a similar reaction to scenes witnessed on TV of Take That concerts and vocal responses from the fairer sex that would have embarrassed the regulars of a seedy strip joint.

The band love it though, beaming away as they play their own brand of bluesy-rock 'n' roll, airing all their singles as well as much of *Replenish* and the new album *Glow*. The encore is the cue for a further bout of screaming as Gary returns minus waistcoat but once more sporting his jacket -

BIS
New Transistor
Heroes
(Wiiiija)

This sort of thing has to happen every once in a while I suppose. When it does, most of us pray to the God of Pop (no, not Chris Evans) that it will never happen again; but it will.

The first track is called "Tell It To The Kids" (yeah...right on), so I will. Bis are crap.

From the appalling artwork, through to the Eammon Holmes-style introduction and from there through the remaining inanity they have called an album, you get the impression that Bis comprise of a bunch of pre-pubescents on speed and an education by-pass.

Tom Stoppard once described good writing as being like a cricket bat and bad writing like a plank of wood that leaves your hands sore. Bis just about qualify for the lollipop stick you drop down the urinals.

On "Popstar Kill", a voice that makes Shampoo sound credible sings: "Hey popstar you're just pretend, the kids won't be deceived...we just want the truth."

The funny thing is, the truth is right there in the song: "One day you'll

what a tease!

Unfortunately, the fluidity and cohesion seen earlier has left the building, prompting one of the band to remark that "it's just like rehearsal". The evening draws to a close with Gary returning after stage-diving to enquire: "Who's got my fucking shoes!?"

I leave, won over to the Reef cause - if you missed them this time, don't worry - I'm sure that "they'll come back brigh..." no, I can't do it.

Nils Eastwood



realise that you're not that great, the people hate you...".

And don't print your lyrics on the record sleeve. Reading them is even more painful than listening to the absurdly named "Manda-Rin" - just try to sing them.

Please Bis, don't record another album- the whole idea of you lot making records is about as good an idea as trying to self-administer oral sex and far less likely to lead to a decent result.

Why don't you just concentrate on doing your 'A' levels or something? Anything. Just don't bother us with 13 quids-worth of bad-smelling turd.



Robby Elson

THE LEMONHEADS
Live at LMUSU

I've always thought the Lemonheads a little dull on record- Dando's voice a little bland, the music a little too simple. Seeing them live though, I realised that it is this simplicity that makes the songs so effective.

The melodies, both beautiful and ever so slightly melancholic; guitars that threaten to disintegrate your stomach lining; even the more nonsensical of Dando's lyrics making perfect sense when played at a volume liable to sterilise the most virile of men.

All the old songs were there as well as the new stuff which is all surprisingly good, and a short Gallagher-esque solo spot yielded a far more

effective version of "Big Gay Heart" than the original.

The only drawback to the whole evening was Dando's attempts at between-song banter. Those wilderness years of assorted substance abuse and pestering the Gallagher brothers seem to have taken their toll on his capacity to speak. At first, his struggle for coherence is mildly endearing. Very soon you want to slap some sense into the apparent vacuum between his ears.

The message then? Great new songs, great back catalogue, great gig- just shut up and sing. Evan.

Robby Elson



VAN MORRISON
The Healing Game
(Island)

"In the very first it was rock 'n' roll that set me free in body and soul" ("This Weight"). Van Morrison is back, with his 25th album *The Healing Game* and is still singing about the two most important things in his life, his music and God. "Won't somebody hand me a bible," he pleads in the album's sexy and soulful opener, "Rough God Goes Riding".

In recent years big Van has been experiencing a second wind like he's eaten an egg vindaloo, and the bandwagon just rolls on. In relation to his massively successful previous LP *Days Like This*, *The Healing Game* offers us more of the same. Uplifting jazz, soul, funk, blues, you name it Van does it, and with startling results.

Temper this with the contemplative "Sometimes We Cry" ("Well we're gonna have to sit down and think it right through, If we're only human what can we do?"), and the gospel style of "It Once Was My Life", and you have the old dog at his best.

In between albums Morrison has been hanging out with such crooners as John Lee Hooker and is soon to embark on a UK tour with Bob Dylan. It's hard not to notice the influence of both on his music. The album swings and doo-wops its way through "If You Love Me" and the Dylan-influenced opening of "Burning Ground".

Pee Wee Ellis plays and arranges the inevitable sax throughout, and backing vocalists Brian Kennedy and Katie Kissoon are the perfect foil for the husky vocals of Morrison.

The sublime *Healing Game* shows that Van still clearly is the man.

Ian Lloyd



F A S H I O N

You
are a
'70s
Bond
girl
with
a
licence
to
pull

To those of us still wearing three layers of thermals and a thirty tog puffa jacket, spring may seem a long way off, but for the people on planet fashion the spring has already been and gone.

Recent spring / summer collections featured lashings of girly frills, pastel shades and florals. These look great on Claudia Schiffer but can turn us in the 'real world' into a mum-of-three lookalike and are actually quite scary. Unless you want to

run the risk of looking like the bastard offspring of My Little Pony and Barbara Cartland, cheap frills are one to avoid.

Fortunately for everybody, Gucci has saved the season. Their vision of the 'urban aggressive woman' has had a huge influence on current high street ranges, and for those unable to stretch to the treble figure sum required to purchase a Gucci original, on these pages is a selection of what is available at more realistic prices.

The joy of these clothes lies in their wearability and undeniable essence of glamour. Black can never fail, especially as evening or clubwear, and the sheer or shiny fabrics, cutaway necklines and slit skirts add an unexpected sexiness to the overall look.

Most importantly, to recreate the spirit of the Gucci show, wear it with attitude. Go all the way with smoky panda-eyes, slicked hair and mean stilettos. You are a '70s Bond girl with a licence to pull. Go get 'em.

Photography & Design: Willem John Jaspert Text & Coordination: Rebecca Jordan

Models: Sharon & Polly

Make-up: Michelle & Becca

Thanks to everyone at Cafe Junction

Give
on
gra



ABOVE: Left: Sequin halterneck top, Sugar Shack, £15
Right: Vest top with chain detail, Jeffery Rogers, £17

Left: Sequin halterneck top, £15. Matching Trousers, £30, both Sugar Shack : **BELOW**
Right: Vest top, Jeffery Rogers, £17. Long split skirt, Miss Selfridge, £30



cci a ant



Right: Black vest top with chain detail, Jeffrey Rogers, £16.99. Crochet pencil skirt, Miss Selfridge, £25 ;**ABOVE**

Left: Tunic, Warehouse, £45.

BELOW: Left: Satin combat trousers, Warehouse, £38. Gold belt, Warehouse, £12. Sheer shirt, Miss Selfridge, £27
Right: PVC trousers, Sugar Shack, £35. Silk shirt, Warehouse, £35.



tv

T I P S

Enhance your TV viewing experience; **JENNY WOOD** shows you how

1 Putting the subtitles on *Top of the Pops*.

This is what page 888 was invented for. No more will you ponder for hours over the exact lyrics to deeply meaningful ditties such as "Wannabe". No longer will you be embarrassed because your mates annoyingly correct you when you sing doing the washing up. Yes, putting the subtitles on *Top of the Pops* is the new drug for the '90s - enjoyable, enlightening and highly addictive.



2 Playing *Blind Date* at home.

All the fun of this cult TV show in the comfort of your living room! Simply strategically place a thick piece of paper over one half of the screen, then play along with only Cilla, Graham, and 3 mysterious voices to guide you in your choice. The only disadvantages here are less time to ogle any particularly tasty specimens, and the fact that you always end up with the fat git in comedy Hawaii shorts.



3 Watch ITV footie coverage with *Radio 5* commentary.

What should any avid football fan do when television coverage of the nation's favourite game just isn't up to scratch? Turn the volume up on the trusty wireless, and the sound down on the TV, then sit back and enjoy. Part of the novelty of this is that Alan Green and company don't stop for commercial breaks, allowing you to keep track of developments even when the screen shows a decidedly unsporting advert for double glazing.



4 Playing TV drinking games.

Let the cast of *Friends* help you get plastered. It sounds too good to be true, but Ross and Rachel can be your key to hours of drunken merriment. Just get the beers in and drink an agreed amount whenever the characters squeal "hey you!", laugh manically, flick their hair, etc. This game is not merely restricted to observing the antics of the beautiful-people-over-the-pond however. Try it with *Eastenders*, sports coverage or even *The Simpsons*.



5 Second-guessing the plot on *Neighbours*

This requires no skill, no elaborate props, no University degree, and no explanation.



When will

Getting your 15 minutes of fame is not as easy as you might think. **JOE DOWNIE** mourns the death of a fledgling television career...

It all started when I saw the advert on a flyer in Jumbo Records: "Wanted; enthusiastic individuals who are passionate and knowledgeable about music, for a new television game show called *Name That Tune...*"

A few days later me and a few couple of mates went down to Joseph's Well for the audition. First we had to fill out a lengthy application form, which included the impossible questions Favourite Band and Top Five Records of All Time. I scrawled down a Primal Scream track and, throwing all caution to the wind, opted for Blur as Favourite Band. So far, so good(ish).

We were then ushered into a

room and given a friendly 'you don't have to be bonkers, but it helps' type of introduction, and then the fun and games began. Each of us (about 12 people) were given our own individual 'buzzer' and then the game started.

I ended up with a buzzer which was a children's toy. It seemed programmed with a five second time delay, because when I pressed my buzzer there was a strange silence, then, by the time someone else had answered the question, it suddenly kicked in to life.



making a cool exploding bomb and machine gun type of sound, by which time they had moved on to the next question.

Round one came and went and things weren't looking good. My mates Dave and Al had both answered questions, which also gave them a chance to let their sparkling personalities shine through. Even the 60 year old lady sitting next to me had managed to answer a question about Hank Marvin.



It was frustrating because I *did* know most of the answers, but I just wasn't fast enough. By the time we all swapped buzzers it was too late; my confidence was shattered and my morale low. I left the audition hardly having said a word, and rather humiliated.

In the days that followed, *Name That Tune* became the subject of every conversation, and each morning we would undergo the racing to the letterbox ritual.

Finally, the letter arrived, saying thankyou, but your services are not required. My housemate Dave did not get a letter at the same time. This was not a good sign.

A week later he got the letter he had been waiting for, and we haven't heard anything **but** *Name That Tune* since. Maybe it's for the best; while he's up on stage bricking it, I'll be happily getting pissed and having a great time in the studio audience. **i**

The Truth Is Not Necessarily Out There...

The X-Files; harmless fun or a potentially dangerous and misleading sci-fi series? **M. REZA SHAMEY** thinks the latter...

The *X-Files*; one of the most popular TV programmes in the world. Why? Well, it's quite simple: human beings have always been fearful of the unknown.

This has taught mankind to be cautious, and fear continues to be one of man's main tools of survival. However, unjustified fear has also

caused many wars and cost many lives and this is where *The X-Files* becomes politically incorrect.

The X-Files series has chosen to explore the path of fear and is cleverly targeted at the younger and slightly intellectual generation. It attacks some government agencies for preventing the publication of documents regarding the possible existence of extra-terrestrial life. It also explores unfamiliar and apparently dangerous parts of other cultures.

So a typical "us against them", "goodies



I be Famous?

Public humiliation didn't deter hundreds of romantic hopefuls from taking the track down the long and winding road of the *Blind Date* screen test. Here's **MARY QUINN** with that quick recap...



The Bloke

Q: Why have you decided to go on *Blind Date*?

A: I just quite like the whole idea of it really. Am I looking for romance? Too right I am, mate. I'm basically just going on to enjoy myself, but I really don't know what to expect. I've never been on television before, but if I get on I'm really looking forward to it. Want to see my party piece...?!



Number One

Q: Are you hoping for romance, or just after a free holiday abroad?

A: No, I'm not too concerned about the holiday, because you might get stuck in Bognor Regis or something. As long as I'm not made to look stupid, that's the main thing. Walking into this room is probably going to be more intimidating than walking onto a TV set.



Number Two

Q: What things did they ask you to do in the audition?

A: First of all we all filled out lots of forms. Then we had to discuss what we had written with the interviewers. They asked us if any of us had any preferences or aversions to different races or cultures, which was a bit weird. Then they told us that if we were successful, we might have to come back.



Number Three

Q: Why do you think you would make a good subject for *Blind Date*?

A: I love the show, I watch it every Saturday, but I think the people need a bit more *oomph* in them so I thought I'd come down here and show them what I'm made of. I've been in the movies as an extra, y'know. They asked me my marital status, which seemed a stupid question to ask.

and baddies" scenario is set up, and in short Mulder and Scully stand against *all* the forces of darkness!

Is this the whole picture though? No. Like many other TV programmes, subtle political messages are often embedded in the small talk. Whilst it is naive to think that generally TV programmes are not politically orientated, or at least politically driven, some of us optimistically think that some space is, or perhaps should be reserved for pure entertainment!

A number of *X-Files* episodes have dealt with the subject of minority groups and their cultures. Unfortunately they don't give a true image or even a realistic model of minorities to the viewing public. Beware, the truth is not necessarily out there!

In one episode Isfahan - a terrorist group formed by Iranian immigrants in the United States - is said to be responsible for an attack carried out on a psychic girl in a

street; later on it was discovered that the attack had nothing to do with them. As with the Oklahoma bombing, Iranians were blamed, but American terrorists were responsible. This case is particularly disturbing because the image of terror was put on Isfahan, one of the most beautiful cities in the Middle East.

Another episode featured the Chinese black market where immigrants, out of poverty and desperation, entered a kind of Russian roulette game involving body parts and were then forbidden to leave.

Yes, there *are* many people who make a living from human abuse and exploitation in every corner of the world, however, it was Chinese tradition and culture that was really the centre of the attack; the moral of the story being that the Chinese minority in the USA is up to dark deeds.

Many similar instances can be found, but to finish, the case of an African immigrant (yes, yet again) who has managed to survive by sucking hormones out of people's brains serves as an excellent

example. A social service worker surprisingly tells this 'natural hunter', "this is the first step, and then I will help you to bring all your family, your cousins and your cousins' cousins to this country".

In order to get 'naturalisation' one has to go through a labyrinthian immigration procedure and perhaps even then be turned down. So how was he supposed to achieve this so easily?!

The moral of the story this time was not the case of a brain sucking African, it was the fact that immigrants are dangerous and are coming here - be suspicious and help the government to stop them.

I am not against *The X-Files* series. Generally, I enjoy watching it, but what should be stressed is that minorities are virtually always presented as victims, or as perpetrators of evil. In an age of increasing globalisation, it is damaging to indulge in this kind of unjustified fear. In order to find the truth, we should always keep our eyes and ears open and see both sides of the coin.



THE OFFICIAL LEEDS UNIVERSITIES

Graduation Ball

Main Stage

JTQ

No Way Sis

KISS FM's Tony Valentine

plus special guests

Alternative Tent

Brighton Beach

featuring special guest bands

200ft of Bar

Two Wine and Champagne Bars

Food and Transport included in ticket price

Club Tent

Wildlife presents

Graeme Park

Tom Wainwright

Gordon Kaye

and lyl

20th June 1997 6pm - 6am
at Lotherton Hall

Tickets £39.50 available to LUU and LMU Graduands on 29th April only
Ticket sales open to all other students from 30th April

SLEEDS STUDENT

Incorporating **juice** magazine

Guardian/ NUS Student Newspaper of the Year

April 25, 1997

Vol 27: Issue 19



JUICE DIGEST: TWIN TOWN, FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS, STAR WARS, LSR PLUS 7-DAY LISTINGS GUIDE

ATTACKER GAVE ME 'DRUGS KISS'

Club victim's hallucinations after assault

By LAURA DAVIS

A **TERRIFIED** clubber collapsed after a man grabbed her for a french kiss and forced two LSD tablets down her throat.

The student was celebrating the end of term in Majestyk when the stranger seized her and pushed the drugs into her mouth with his tongue.

During the next 12 hours she suffered horrific hallucinations, believing she was being attacked by six foot spiders.

A friend who stayed with the student, who does not wish to be named, throughout the night and said she was intent on hurting herself: "She kept banging her head against the wall and it didn't seem to hurt her."

The victim confronted the manager of Majestyk two days later, but said although he expressed concern, he was unable to help. "They said I should have told them about it on the night," she said. "But I didn't even know where I was!"

Conrad Nugent, the general manager of Majestyk, said he sympathised with the student: "It's a very horrifying thing to happen to anybody. Obviously I feel very sorry for the girl but I don't believe we have a problem here."

A spokesperson from the National Drugs Helpline condemned the attack: "The effects of LSD have a lot to do with the user's state of mind before taking it. This student would've been scared even before it started to take effect."



Grants to go after election

By MATTHEW GENEVER

FUTURE generations of students face having to cope without any financial support from the government - whoever wins the general election.

The high-powered Dearing Committee, backed by both Labour and the Conservative party, is set to recommend the phasing out of the student grant as soon as next summer.

Tony Blair has said he is committed to scrapping the student grant system and replacing it with a series of loans to be paid back over a 20-year period. And a source on the committee admitted: "Nobody is defending the maintenance grant. You have to find ways of cutting costs in the system."

Leeds North-West: turn to pages 16-17

Simon Caffrey, President of LMUSU, sits on the committee as a member of the governance and structure subgroup. He said: "Higher education should be free in principle, but the fact is that the money just isn't there at the moment. I would just hope that the money saved will be put back into the universities, but I can't see that happening."

Caffrey continued: "Forcing students to pay for tuition is wrong as most graduates will be in the upper income bracket, and so will pay more taxes anyway."



Passion for fashion

CORONATION SWEET: Vera Duckworth (Liz Dawn) was star attraction at a Leeds fashion show organised by Park Lane College and Leeds Rhinos in aid of the Liz Dawn Breast Cancer Appeal. She was joined by fellow Corrie actresses Gaynor Faye and Debbie McAndrew. The clothes were supplied by Leeds stores and the models all appeared free of charge. Pic: Piers Martin

INSIDE: News 1-11, Comment 6-9, Feature 12-13, Outlook 15-19, Sport 20-24. Plus 24-page **juice** magazine

LEEDS STUDENT

This week in Britain's award-winning student newspaper of the year

NEWS



Housing hassle:
The downside of living in uni accommodation
pages 4-5

COMMENT

Easter over, the summer term begins: fasten your seatbelts for the ride
page 9



FEATURE



What? Maggie's not running this time? What you don't know about politics is revealed
pages 12-13

Outlook

The Empire Strikes Back: Travel to Hong Kong
pages 18-19



SPORT



BUSA latest, including triumph for the rugby league stars of LUU
pages 22-23



24-page special magazine

ON THE HORIZON with Stevie Sunshine

Saturday: After a dry start, increasing cloud will bring outbreaks of rain. Max. temperature: 15C (60F).

Sunday: Another dry start followed by light rain. Maximum temperature 15C (60F).

Outlook for the rest of the week: Cloud and rain at the start of the week will clear to a mainly dry week.

Weathercall Regional forecast 0891 500 417

A LOAD OF BALLS

Our look at the Wednesday lottery numbers

8 12 17 23 34 43

And the bonus ball: 36

EXPOSED: SOMETHING INTERESTING AT NUS CONFERENCE

The naked truth of the body politic

FOR anyone suffering election fatigue here's a way to make yourself better: rip off all your clothes, flaunt your wares before two thousand people and shimmy past the grasp of despairing policemen as you sprint away into eternity.

One man tried it and it worked. He burst robeless across the floor of this year's National Union of Students Conference in Blackpool, ducked and dived the shocked onlookers and, for all one knows, headed for the sea like Reggie Perrin to quit this world forever.

"(It's male... and it's seen its last politics for the day," is how the late cricket commentator John Arlott would have put it.)

What could have driven a man so far? The answer is politics. You might think you got enough this holiday just seeking out every dose of election coverage as an excuse for not starting that dissertation.

Anoraks

But some take it much further. They play at politics themselves. Every year a weird band of ego-tripping careerists and anorak-sporting nerds gather for a pretend parliament all of their own, firmly convinced that everything they say is shaking the planet to its core.

The Leeds delegations therefore naturally feel at home. Simon 'Chirpie' Caffrey, President of LMUSU, delights in strutting around trying to look important despite the alcoholic odour

that pursues him. Kate Woodhead enjoys shouting, Darren Green likes being jovial and Laurie Spieler absolutely relishes making speeches and darting about with a mobile phone as if he's secretly running the show.

For once LUU, one of the biggest delegations at the entire event, hadn't just come along to make up the numbers. They had a cause to champion that would take the nation by storm. Conservatives stand for the great British nation, Labour campaigns for social justice for all, the Liberal Democrats pledge to resurrect



education for our children. LUU fights tooth and nail to get NUS Conference extended by half a day.

Normally, you see, it goes on until Thursday lunch-time, but this year it was scheduled to close on Wednesday night, robbing us of crucial hours when we could be dissecting parts of motions, voting for more Labour Students wearing Blairite grins to run NUS for another year and dodging the inevitable barrage of stickers, flyers and documents that are more unreadable than the Maastricht treaty.

"We need a debate on why this conference has been shortened by half a day!" bawled Graham Hellowell of Huddersfield University, really getting quite emotional. Intriguingly, Hellowell's medicine for the lost debating time was to spend even more time debating just why it had been lost in the first place. What a university education

can do.

Fortunately, the National Executive Committee - resplendent as always sitting high and proud upon the stage - didn't want to run the risk of a longer conference in case there was time to talk about issues they didn't want to talk about. With their well-rehearsed when-I-scratch-my-nose-it-means-vote-AGAINST technique they were therefore able to signal to the political puppeteers up in the conference balconies to signal to their troops down on the conference floor to vote against Hellowell and LUU.

If this column has given the impression that NUS Conference is one long charade of contrived votes and foretold elections then well spotted. Groups such as Labour Students and the Union of Jewish Students expend incredible amounts of time, energy and mobile phone batteries on getting their way in even the most petty handbag fights. The deep tragedy, or comedy depending which way you look at it, is the sheer futility of it all in the eyes of the real world.

Blairified

And the problem for the spectator is that New Labour are getting too good at it. Last year they had to wheel every deal and scratch every back on the way to finally throwing out the old policy of 'free' education and embracing the Blairified plan that students should help pay their own way. It was an epic struggle between Tony's Empire and the Rebel Alliance of diehard Trotskyites. So much for *Star Wars*, this year was more like *Howard the Duck*. The Trots rolled over and got squashed, looking as dead and buried as socialism, Clause IV, Arthur Scargill and the rest of Old

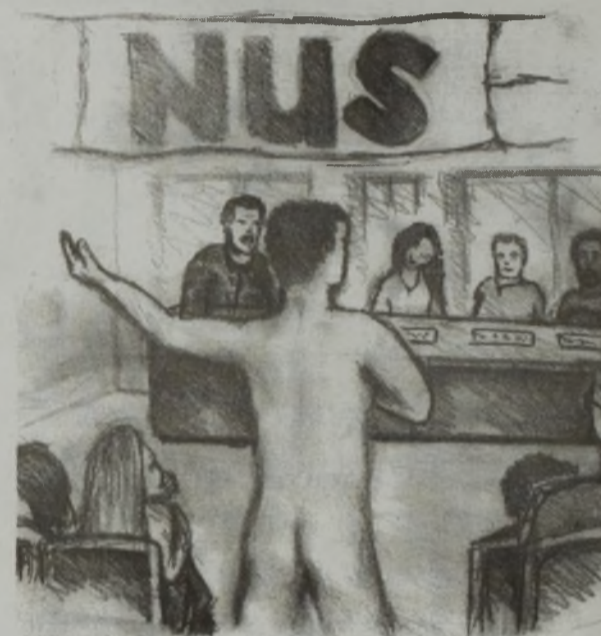


Illustration: Colin Hoginson

Labour. Will politics always be so predictable?

But then, as the flame of student radicalism threatened to flicker and then die, the fabled Phoenix began to rise. And it came from Leeds. Princess Tiggy, genial Mat Ray and the rest hadn't carried bagfuls of flyers declaring "We will fight them on the speeches," all the way here not to make a big fuss about the burning why-is-conference-only-three-days issue.

As the event neared its final hour LUU suddenly rose, climbing on chairs and making all kinds of noise. The rest of the vast conference hall spun round in disbelief. One day someone'll turn it into a movie, with stirring classical background music, the enchanted expression of Robin Williams and the respectful

title *Dead Anoraks Society*.

And then the final glory: the nude intruder made his dramatic appearance and this elaborately staged Blairite showpiece descended into farce. Who was the mystery man? Could it be Bruce Hartley, LUU's Finance & Administration officer, protesting against the failure to invite him? Or Robin Van Den Hende, the train-spotterish pundit keen to test whether the NUS constitution has any provision on how to handle its delegates *au naturel*? Or maybe it was just Chirpie after paying another visit to the bar.

Conservative Central Office might have had its Blair-chasing chicken, but NUS now has the naked ape. Who said British politics has gone to the dogs?

LEEDS ARMY STANDS UP FOR LOST TIME

BY DAVID SMITH IN BLACKPOOL



PROTEST: Tiggy Irish of LUU

ANGRY delegates from Leeds caused mayhem by wrecking the biggest student conference of the year - because they said it wasn't long enough.

Representatives of LUU stood on their chairs and chanted slogans to bring a standstill to the National Union of Students Conference in Blackpool.

Police arrived at the scene as the demonstration gathered

momentum and a streaker dashed across the conference floor.

The delegates were protesting against the shortening of conference by half a day, a ruling on which they were not consulted.

"The issue might seem small and insignificant but it is a classic example of how the National Executive Committee forces its own agenda onto the

members," said protester Mat Ray, Societies officer at LUU.

NUS leaders looked on helplessly as other delegates joined the protest and stormed the stage. "I don't see the point of complaining about lost time by wasting even more," a spokeswoman said.

LUU was embroiled in controversy two years ago when it submitted a spoiled ballot paper for a crucial vote on education funding at an NUS Conference in Derby.

Earlier, the conference agreed to emphasise student choice when lobbying Sir Ron Dearing's review of education funding, and to step up NUS's campaign against fascism and racism.

● A DELEGATE from LMUSU is believed to have run up a phone bill of around £300 in his Blackpool hotel room. The union was then forced to foot the bill.

THE SPIANS SCOOP TOP AWARDS AT NATIONAL DRAMA FESTIVAL

DRAMA TALENT STEALS SHOW



TOP TALENT: Student director John Donnelly whose play scooped four awards at the festival
Pic: Sarah Davis

From the director's chair

John Donnelly speaks about sex, death and fame

“THE play came together during Euro '96. We were watching the matches in a hall of residence and it was so intense. It was amazing to see the way people interacted and it just gave me the idea. Suddenly it was okay to call the other country names and the common room became male territory.”

I first directed the union's Theatre Group doing the play and it was successful. I then rewrote the play over the holidays and it transferred to being an In Your Space production. They're the touring branch of Theatre Group and they took it to Scarborough and then it'll be on it's way to the Edinburgh Fringe but I'm still in the director's seat which I enjoy doing.

It's fantastic that we won all the awards and my award has given me the courage to think I can direct. The point's not that I get my name known but that I can get sponsorship to carry on producing plays that I want to do and that people want to see.

”



TOASTING SUCCESS: Cast members of *A Short Play About Sex and Death* in a scene from the award winning drama

BUDDING thespians swept the board scooping an amazing 11 awards at the *Sunday Times* National Student Drama Festival.

The students stole the show with four stunning plays - two from Leeds University and two from Bretton Hall - at the week long festival in Scarborough. From 90 entries only 16 were chosen for performance.

A Short Play about Sex and Death, written and directed by second year Leeds University English student John Donnelly, took the audience by storm with its black comedy portrayal of football, sexism and, ultimately, sex and death.

“Its sheer energy was hugely enjoyable,” said *Sunday Times* theatre critic

By **GINA HILL**

and competition judge Robert Hewison.

“The freshness and professionalism of its writer/director and the energy of the two football crazy lads really made this play stand out,” added Hewison.

John won the *Sunday Times* Playwriting Award and the Personal Managers' Association Director/Playwright Award. The latter gives him the opportunity to spend time with a professional theatre company to gain experience.

Nervous

“I was looking forward to the week. I was a bit nervous but it was a great experience,” said John. “There was so much talent there it really made you push yourself to do the very best you could.”

“The audience reaction made me realise why I'd written the play in the first place. That two hundred people were having a good time because of our hard work

was a great feeling.”

Two of the plays actors, John Hopkins and Jim Gitsham, also won awards for their portrayal of the two footie fanatics.

Meanwhile, fellow student Paul Cooke, from Bretton Hall, took the prestigious RSC Buzz Goodbody Student Director Award for his production of Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*.

Described by judges as “an intelligent, professional and fresh take,” both Paul and John Donnelly were praised as “two very talented young directors.”

Steven Berkoff's *Decadence*, performed by Kayla Fell - an English student at Leeds University - and Nathan Rimell won the Ensemble acting award.

Also commended were Andy Murton and Wendy Reed from Bretton Hall for their performance of Jim Cartwright's *Two*.

“Leeds has certainly made its mark,” said audience member Will Wollen, a fourth year Leeds University student.

“*The Caretaker* was a really tight slick performance while *Short Play* completely blew us away. It took the audience by surprise and they loved it.”

John praised the other groups' plays, saying there was no ill will in the competition between them.

“We all liked what everyone else was doing and really wanted each other to do well.”

For the present he is writing another play to be performed at the Studio Theatre in November.

Television

He has also been approached by the Alamo TV company about writing for television in the future.

But John maintains he still has his feet firmly on the ground: “It's a bit of a come down after the festival. You feel like the world's your oyster but then you suddenly realise that you've got an essay due in next week and it brings you back to earth with a bump! But I wouldn't have missed it for the world.”

IRA chaos mars return

By **LAURA DAVIS**

As police battled to minimise disruption, Leeds University opened its doors to stranded businessmen, transforming the Parkinson Building into a rest stop.

Alert

The IRA bombing occurred in or near a signal box at the West end of Leeds City Railway Station, shortly after 9am on Friday, when police became aware of a security alert in the city

centre. There were no injuries.

All buildings within the area were evacuated, causing disastrous losses for some of the city's stores. Mr Oliver, manager of C&A, said: “We were closed for four hours, so we obviously suffered some loss of business.”

“Everyone stayed very calm, but people were confused and the information from the police was sketchy.”

Police put up over 700 posters on Tuesday, appealing to the public for witnesses to

come forward.

They are also in the process of viewing thousands of hours of video tape from local security cameras, which they hope will help them in their investigation to catch the perpetrators.

Havoc

Investigations are also underway into the alerts in London at the beginning of the week which caused havoc in the city as most of the capital ground to a standstill.



FRANTIC: Travellers are led to safety after a bomb alert at Leeds City Station
Pic: George Philipas

THE bomb explosion at Leeds Railway Station last week caused disarray for scores of students returning after the Easter holiday.

“It was a nightmare trying to get back,” said one student caught in the drama. “All the trains were cancelled and I didn't know if I would make it.”

“I was very scared and worried. It's horrible when something like this happens so close to home.”



STATUE-NAPPERS: LMUSU hockey players show off their unusual souvenir

IT'S A HOCKEY HORROR SHOW

DRUNKEN hockey players caused £2500 of damage when they stole a valuable bronze statue from Keele university after a post match drinking bout.

David Cooper, Duncan Radley and Graham Jonson had been playing in a friendly against Keele men's first XI for LMUSU. Afterwards they stole the £10,000 statue and carried it back to the team minibus where they were spending the night.

Pranksters

The theft was captured by a security camera, although the pranksters had placed a large wheely-bin in the way, so that passers-by could not see what they were doing.

A Keele University spokesperson described their actions as "a serious piece of vandalism." Police were initially called in, but the statue has been returned and the students concerned have been disciplined internally by LMU.

In a hearing last week they were placed on a year's probation and told they must foot the bill for repair work

By JAN HENEK

to the statue - an 8 foot tall sculpture by Diana Whelan called "The Flame". They risk being kicked off their courses should they get into any more trouble.

Hockey club treasurer Chris Turner said: "It's a tradition for players to get a team steal when they play away from home - though it's usually something smaller like a hockey ball or an ashtray."

Valuable

He said that the team members involved hadn't realised how valuable the statue was, and had always intended to give it back to the university.

Ed White, sports and recreational officer at LMU said: "I think a bit of healthy pranksterism is alright, but this one just went too far."

One of the players involved in the incident commented "It's only fair that we pay for what we've done. This is one drunken, stupid thing that won't be repeated."

UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION IS

Summoned and tear on

By ANDY KELK

A COURT summons has been served against a student because of minor damage to her accommodation.

Bonnie Powell, a second year Fine Art student, was living at LMU's Sugarwell Court in her first year and on leaving cleaned up as much as possible. "I got my mum along to help me tidy and we left it in almost perfect condition."

At the start of this year she was shocked to find that the university was demanding £139 from her to cover damage to her room. She enquired about what the money was for and was sent a breakdown.

Astounding

"The break down was astounding - they were asking £10 to clean a light switch, £10 to remove stickers and £36 for a new pair of curtains. I asked why they needed to buy a new pair of curtains and they told me it was because there was a pen mark on them."

Bonnie was also being asked to pay £62.50 for a new vanity unit top because the old one had a stain on that she hadn't even noticed. She was billed, along with her flatmates, for a missing kitchen chair which was actually in the flat next door.

Bonnie and her mother both wrote to LMU to complain about the amount she was being forced to pay. When she got back from her Easter holidays, she found a letter telling her she was due in

court over the matter.

"I couldn't believe that they'd gone that far. The letter told me to reply within 21 days but I couldn't do that because it arrived while I was away and by the time I got the letter, the time limit had expired. This is a university I'm dealing with and they don't even appreciate that students are not going to be in Leeds during their holidays!"

Bonnie is outraged that the university are charging so much for repairs which are very minor: "None of the damage was particularly serious - it's just wear and tear."

"A pen mark doesn't stop curtains being useful. Doesn't the £45 rent I pay cover reasonable damage? They expect us to leave the flats in perfect condition which is impossible - we do have to live there."

"They're asking for £60 to

redecorate two walls in the kitchen - that's ridiculous - why not get students to do it as a summer job and it keeps them occupied and it'll work out cheaper. The whole system just isn't student friendly - we don't have money to play with."

Harsh

Simon Caffrey, President of LMUSU agreed that the fine was very harsh: "I see that the university needs to fine people for damage to flats but this is just general wear and tear and it isn't acceptable to fine people for that. They should be more flexible and reasonable."

"My advice to the student concerned is to ask for evidence that repairs have been done and to ask for the old curtains to be given to her as she has effectively paid for them."

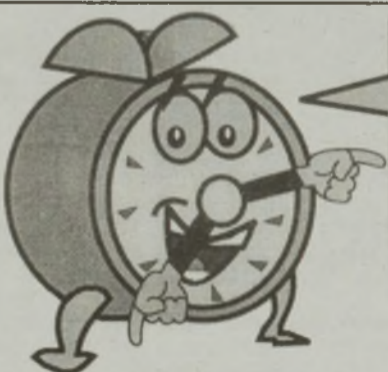
LMU have refused to comment on the situation.

YOU ARE HEREBY CHARGED...

Bonnie's bill is pretty hefty - here's how LMU

- Cleaning one light switch, charge - £10
- Removing stickers, charge - £10
- One new vanity unit top, charge - £62.50
- One pair of new curtains, charge - £36
- Redecorate two walls, charge - £60
- One chair moved from next door, charge - £36

Grand Total: £214 -£75 deposit=
final bill of £139



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Club crash

A TOP Leeds nightclub has been closed indefinitely after it was plunged into financial crisis, writes Naveed Raja.

The Pleasure Rooms has cancelled all its events until further notice amid rumours of financial mismanagement.

A spokesperson for the troubled venue admitted the closure was due to "management difficulties."

The club is host to nights such as *Back 2 Basics* and *Its Obvious*.

The future of these popular nights is uncertain, but next week's *Juice* has an in-depth report on the latest developments in the ongoing saga.

Britpopping the question

ARE Blur trying to kill the Frankenstein's Monster of Britpop they were instrumental in creating?

This is the kind of exam question students could soon be facing in order to pass Oasis Studies or become a Bachelor of Blur, writes David Smith.

At least it seemed possible at the nation's first conference devoted to the Britpop phenomenon, held at Leeds University over the Easter holiday.

More than 50 delegates from around the country came for a series of lectures on subjects including Blur as the voice of post-Thatcherite working-class Britain and the alleged 'death' of Britpop.

"We couldn't make up our mind

whether Britpop is dead," said Dr Steve Sweeney-Turner of the university's Music department.

He added: "Some of my colleagues were slightly bemused by the choice of subject but they are getting used to me. The department is chuffed by the interest from national newspapers and TV." The event attracted a live broadcast from BBC TV's *Breakfast News* programme.

Dr Sweeney-Turner argued that Britpop has become an important subject worthy of academic study. "There's a lot of complex stuff going on in there, relating to ethnic identity, gender and sexuality, playfulness and irony. It is very postmodern."

UNDER ATTACK OVER 'EXTORTIONATE' CHARGES

to court for wear university flats



SUMMONED: Bonnie was alarmed to find out that she was due in court over a pen mark on a pair of curtains, an unnoticed stain and a moved chair
Plc: Caroline Penry Davey

Phone lovin' criminal

AMERICAN rap star Steve Borovoni was arrested by police just minutes after coming off stage at a local students' union, writes David Smith.

The Fun Lovin' Criminals drummer faced allegations of making obscene and threatening phone calls to women in local gyms.

Police arrived too late to catch Borovoni after the packed gig at LMUSU but made the arrest at his hotel less than an hour later.

The star spent the night in a local police station and was questioned and cautioned.

Borovoni, 29, was released at around 6.30pm, allowing the band to keep a date at the Hacienda in Manchester the same night.

Simon Bell, Entertainments Manager at LMUSU, said: "The gig here went very smoothly and everybody seemed to enjoy it. Then the police came but the band had already gone back to their hotel."

Andy Way, Regional Press Officer for the band, criticised LMUSU's reaction to the incident. "Nobody was found guilty of anything and the union was out of order to say they'd have pulled the gig if they'd known about the allegations. It was not as serious as reports suggested."

But Simon Caffrey, President of LMUSU, responded: "We would've looked at all the facts and spoken to their agent. The same rules go for any band."

Warning of fake booze

DRINKERS are warned to be on their guard as counterfeit Vodka worth thousands of pounds is being distributed around West Yorkshire.

Police and Trading Standards Officers seized almost two thousand bottles in a raid on a business premises in Morley.

"Had it been genuine it would have been worth £20,000," said Paul Cooper, Senior Principal Officer of the West Yorkshire Trading Standards Service. "We became aware of a problem last summer and know there is more illegal stock out there."

Dickie honoured

CRICKET legend Harold 'Dickie' Bird is to scoop an honorary degree from Leeds University - to a mixed reception from local students, writes Olly Tipper.

Bird, a native Yorkshireman and the sport's most famous umpire, will be presented with a Doctor of Laws degree in July.

But students were ambivalent about the award. "The university is giving away degrees too cheaply," said J Hunter, a student living in Barnsley.

Broadcast journalism student Lucy Wright said: "It undermines the work real students do and makes our degrees look easy to get."

Rachel Kelnar, a Politics

PRICEY PLACES

ACCOMMODATION at university has been slammed by an NUS survey for being too expensive.

The study reveals that there has been a massive expansion in the number of rooms now being built with en-suite rooms in the hope that the buildings can be used as hotel-style accommodation during holidays.

The cost of building such luxury apartments always filters back to the students who live there during term-time.

Douglas Trainer, president of NUS, criticised universities: "It seems the needs of the students are increasingly down on the list of priorities when it comes to accommodation."

"Hall fees nationally are up 10 per cent, while the rise in rented accommodation in the private sector is just half of one per cent."

The most expensive place to live was revealed, unsurprisingly, as London costing more, on average than a student grant.

St Andrew's in Scotland came out as cheapest but even uni accommodation there cost 56 per cent of the full student grant.

NEWSFILE



Singing success

JARVIS Cocker impersonator Gareth Dickinson is all set to take part in the grand final of ITV's *Stars in Their Eyes* show, writes Ruth Young.

Dickinson, a second year astrophysics student at Leeds University won a vote on the popular Saturday night programme.

He will go on to give a repeat performance of the Pulp classic 'Common People' that won him his place in the final.

Gareth said: "I am very much looking forward to the final, especially with it being a live performance and I think I have a good chance of winning."

The success of his *Stars in Their Eyes* performance has resulted in a lot of attention for Gareth's own band 'Bingo' which he is very pleased about. He is also still considering fronting a Pulp tribute band.

The final will be a live contest with the result decided by a phone vote from viewers. It will be shown on the ITV network on Saturday June 7th.

From Leeds with love

THE theme is Bond, James Bond, next month as the Leeds Royal Armouries is granted a licence to thrill, writes David Smith.

'The World of 007: The Official James Bond Exhibition' to be staged at the museum will be the world's biggest ever shrine to the secret agent immortalised by television holiday schedules.

It will feature nine galleries of cars, guns, gadgets and girls, including the underwater Lotus and Scaramanga's legendary golden gun.

"Our concern here is arms and armoury, and the exhibition will put Bond in that context," said Nicholas Boole, press officer for the Royal Armouries Museum.

Phone moans

IT'S good to talk - but not for too long if BT are adding up your phone bill, writes David Smith.

Rivals such as Bell Cablemedia and Mercury consistently offer their customers cheaper deals, according to the consumer magazine *Which?*

Switching away from BT could save students up to 20 per cent on payments, the study shows.

LEEDS STUDENT

Leeds Student is an independent newspaper serving students at Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds University and other colleges in and around Leeds. All our journalists abide by a code of conduct, but if you have any problems, please contact the Editor. Comments, contributions and helpful criticism are invited.

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THE GENERAL ELECTION IS THE CURRENT MEDIA EPIC, BUT WILL IT AFFECT THE OUTCOME?

Time to praise the messenger

THE defining moment of the election campaign was John Prescott's admission that you can't always tell the truth in politics. So the Conservatives triumphantly announced at their press conference.

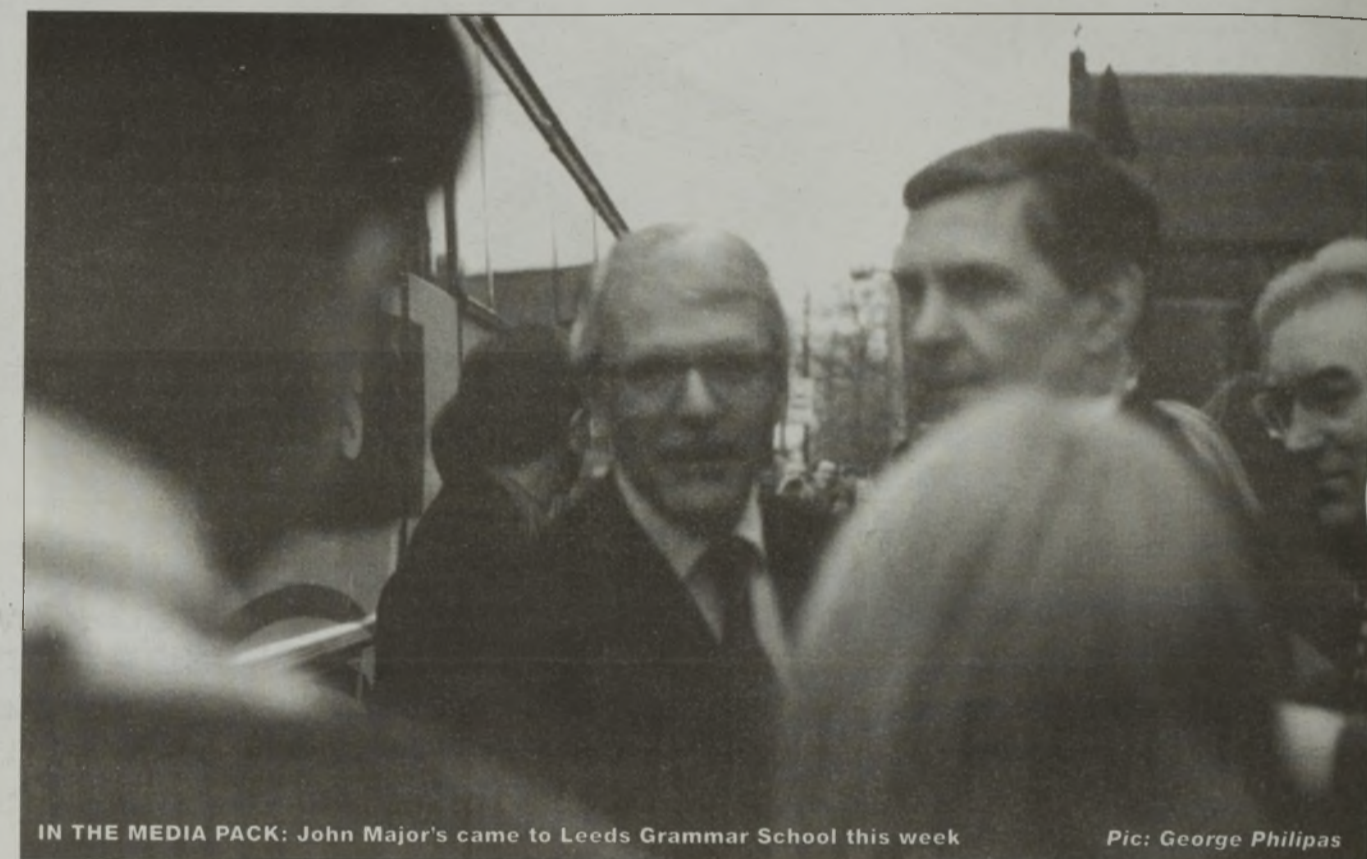
No, the true defining moment was the revelation that some Tory Ministers had ruled out a single European currency in spite of the Government's official line to 'wait-and-see'. So Tony Blair told the hordes of journalists following the story.

They were both wrong of course. If ever there was a defining moment in this extraordinary campaign it had to be the day the world's media descended on the innocent, unsuspecting town of Tatton.

There the incumbent Conservative MP, Neil Hamilton, was facing pressure to resign over allegations he had tabled parliamentary questions in return for illicit payments. Slowly we learned of an 'anti-sleaze' challenger and then came the news it was to be journalist Martin Bell - to the surprise of Hamilton, the media and apparently Bell himself.

Bell was perfectly cast, an inscrutable, slightly weary interloper, the white-suited stranger in town who would rid it of the plague. From him our televisions cut to Hamilton, seemingly subdued, but then who wouldn't be with the formidable Mrs Hamilton as an ally. And when we saw at their side Bill Roache, *Coronation Street's* Ken Barlow, reality caved in and soap opera took over.

And that was the point: the election has become the greatest soap opera on earth. Like the Gulf war or world championship snooker, it has been an epic television event, transforming the mundane and the real into an ongoing story of familiar faces, heroes and villains, triumphs and disasters. The storylines come and go but the characters and locations are the same, providing a regular



IN THE MEDIA PACK: John Major's came to Leeds Grammar School this week

Pic: George Philipas



BY DAVID SMITH

tea-time fix in the build-up to a final episode cliff-hanger.

Now, as every *Guardian* reader will know, it is assumed that such media hi-jacking of the great British politic can only be a damaging thing, ranking personalities before policies and soundbites above sense. This is the same *Guardian* which - along with so many other self-appointed media watchdogs - spends so long pondering the editorial stance of *The Sun* or the bulldog as election motif, that you could be forgiven for not remembering there are policies at stake at all.

The media is at its worst when it becomes obsessed with the negative effects of that most pernicious of forces, the media.

Once you swallow the facile truth that journalism is subjective, you can get down to the serious business of tuning into every twist and turn of the drama, realising that *ITN News* at 5.40 is infinitely more unpredictable than *Neighbours* on the opposite channel.

This is not to say the media

is not a player on the stage. The significance of *The Sun's* not so sudden declaration and Martin Bell's intervention have been greatly exaggerated, but the press has been instrumental in pushing the indiscretions of MPs like Hamilton and Piers Merchant, alleged in *The Sun* to be having an extra-marital affair, high up the campaign agenda.

WHY, however, should this be cause to mourn? Imagine, for a moment, the alternative. That you be asked to vote for a candidate without any knowledge of their private misdeeds, to merely accept the official version, cleansed of any trace of sleaze or hypocrisy.

For every one of its indulgences - and the battle of the chickens springs to mind - there have been many class acts to celebrate in the ongoing media circus. Jeremy Paxman's incredulous sneers, Vincent Hanna's cutting remarks, even David Dimbleby's belligerent probes - all these have become

national treasures. *Radio 4's Today* programme and *BBC2's Newsnight* have excelled as ever, while large sections of the once true blue Tory press - uncertain which way to swing this time - have consequently focused on news and debate instead of propaganda.

A special mention too for *Radio 5 Live*, the 24-hour news network with the time to cover party press conferences and which has provided coverage unprecedented in its comprehensiveness.

However apathetic and ignorant many voters may be, it is worth remembering we are still the best informed electorate of all time, given infinitely more opportunities to understand the personalities and the policies than in the pre-media age.

I for one am sorry we will not witness the spectacle of a leadership debate on TV. There are many scare stories about how such occasions descend into posturing and the swapping of soundbites, but with a firm chairman a debate is a debate,

not perfect but surely preferable to no debate at all.

Hence Tony Blair's reluctance to take part, lest the media find him out the way it did Labour's U-turns on privatisation or the Tories' divisions over Europe. No one can blame him. He has nothing to gain and everything to lose and, given John Major's superior performances under the studio lights, he knows he quite probably would.

The more the media is silenced or diverted by aberrations like Tatton, the more it suits Tony Blair. So far ahead in the polls, he is effectively the incumbent, and media intrusion can only threaten to disturb the status quo.

He need not be so concerned. The polls also show what we know already: that the influence of the media on voting intentions is very minimal indeed. Blair, *The Guardian* and other doom-mongers can sleep easy, as this most media-dominated of all elections will not actually be determined by it.

There has never been the remotest shadow of doubt that Labour will win on Thursday by a comfortable margin. Given that we all know what happens in the final episode, the media has done a pretty good job of cranking up the suspense.