As hospital defends staff, the work never stops

Professor James Malone-Lee and Alan Milburn have supported the hospital's staff

Business as usual for the accident and emergency unit at the Whittington hospital, north London, yesterday *Jonathan Evans*

By Cahal Milmo and Ben Russell

THE WHITTINGTON Hospital issued a renewed defence of its care of Rose Addis yesterday as the political storm surrounding the grandmother's stay in casualty raged on.

Senior managers met her family to discuss the case, but the hospital criticised Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative leader, for raising it at Prime Minister's Question Time. Alan Milburn, the Health Secretary, held a private meeting with staff at the hospital to express his support.

Professor James Malone-Lee, medical director of the Whittington, said members of staff had been, "very, very distressed" by the affair.

He said: "We have an incredibly well-tried system where constituency MPs can contact our complaints department in response to a patient's claims. This is the norm.

"For this to appear in the House of Commons like that without any contact from the constituency MP really was appalling. I have never known anything like this in all my time in public service.

"It did huge harm to staff. It's very frightening when senior politicians engage like that over patients you thought you had looked after well."

Inside the hospital's accident and emergency unit yesterday the metal benches in the waiting room were thronged as usual with patients waiting to be called for treatment in one of a series of cubicles painted NHS regulation pastel green.

The unit treats a minimum of 200 patients a day in a busy corner of north London, but it was perhaps unsurprising the name of 94-year-old Rose Addis was on the lips of those holding bruised limbs and sore heads. Aware they were now sitting in perhaps the most politicised accident and emergency ward in Britain, many were eager to talk about their experiences.

Ron Adams, 52, a builder nursing a foot badly bruised in a fall, said: "I've been waiting a couple of hours to be seen.

"You get the feeling that no matter how fast they go, the staff will never end up with an empty waiting room. It's a constantly dripping tap.

"I came here a couple of years ago with my daughter and it was eight hours before we left. The nurses were polite but with the best will in the world they just can't see people quickly enough. This place needs to be twice the size and have four times the staff if it's to run like a patient would like it."

Yesterday, the Whittington casualty unit, a tidy modern complex built six years ago amid the hospital's remaining Victorian buildings, had to make do with a total of 90 staff.

The A&E payroll consists of 50 nurses, three short of the 53 allowed in the hospital budget, along with 20 doctors of various grades and a further 20 auxiliary staff including porters. At any one time around half that number will be on duty. Together they must deal with 73,000 patients a year.

The sick are treated in five different treatment zones, including a major trauma area, a major injuries area, a resuscitation room and a specially designed area for children.

An observation ward containing four beds, where hospital managers say Mrs Addis was placed shortly after her arrival, sits alongside the casualty treatment area.

Patient watchdogs confirmed that long waits in casualty were among the top sources of discontent for users of the hospital.

A report by the Government's Commission for Health Improvement on the Whittington published two weeks ago remarked on the hospital's friendly atmosphere and the way staff communicated with patients. But it also noted concern about casualty waiting times, reporting that in August 2001, "93 patients had waited between four and twelve hours, which was a significant increase on previous months". Trolley waits of more than 12 hours had been reduced, with just three such incidents since March last year.

The hospital, which serves a deprived, multi-ethnic part of north London, is known to have problems, many stemming from inner city deprivation, but it is not regarded as one of the worst performers in the capital.

The local Community Health Council says the level of complaints about A&E services is, "unlikely to be much worse or better than other London hospitals." While a survey of NHS hospitals last year by CHKS, an independent company specialising in measuring health care, found the Whittington was among the top 40 in Britain.

'There is racism in the NHS, just like there is everywhere else'

By Cahal Milmo

THE BRIGHT yellow signs dotted throughout the public waiting areas at the Whittington Hospital yesterday made its position on racism to staff plain: "Verbal abuse is unacceptable. Appropriate action – including legal action – will be taken."

A recent NHS census demonstrated the gravity of the problem. It found that some 100,000 Asian and black NHS workers had reported being racially abused or attacked because of the colour of their skin.

Professor James Malone-Lee, the medical director at the Whittington Hospital, said: "The NHS employs a large numbers of staff who are from ethnic minorities and it is very and when we run into problems with people expressing very racist views."

It was Mr Malone-Lee who had raised the issue on Wednesday night when he suggested that Rose Addis had been selective in her choice of the nurses she would allow to attend to her.

The hospital, anxious to take some of the the heat out of the controversy, retracted the insinuation yesterday. But the reality of racism among some of those using the NHS has been apparent in the occasional comments of patients seeking advice from local community health councils. One CHC source said: "There is racism in the NHS and in the community, just like there is everywhere else."

The Whittington said it did not specifically record incidents of racism against staff but said it had recorded 83 cases of verbal abuse against employees during 2001.

Diane, a staff nurse whose family originates from Jamaica, confirmed the problem as she finished her shift on a general medical ward. She said: "It is the polite racism which is very difficult to deal with. The overt abuse, for example being called a 'black bitch' because you give someone an injection, is almost easier to deal with. You can report the abuser and make your displeasure clear.

"But when you have someone who says 'listen dearie, it is nothing personal but I'd rather you didn't touch me', that's very wounding. Unfortunately it is often a generational thing. It's people who are older, who are in pain or confused and don't want to know about being tolerant."

The Whittington Hospital said it had a formal system for reporting incidents of abuse or violence and took a "zero tolerance" attitude towards all forms of physical aggression or verbal attack. No member of staff is understood to have complained over Mrs Addis's behaviour at the hospital.

Hypocrisy, privacy and race: the issues around the Whittington case

Downing Street's failure to contact Rose Addis's family.

No 10 has been attacked for not seeking the family's permission before disclosing details of Mrs Addis's case. This has in turn led to accusations of hypocrisy because Tony Blair refused to reveal whether his son had been given the MMR jab. His defence is that the family's complaints were already in the public domain.

Iain Duncan Smith's decision to challenge Tony Blair without first contacting the hospital.

Labour and the hospital say the Conservatives acted inappropriately by not checking their facts. Mr Duncan Smith said the family had already spoken to the hospital without success and had nowhere else to go than him as the constituency MP of Mrs Addis's daughter. But he has failed to explain why he did not check her story with the hospital as well.

The amount of detail revealed by the hospital.

Relatives are angry that detailed accounts of cases were put into the public domain, claiming this breaches patient confidentiality. The dispute centres on guidelines issued by the Department of Health in 1996. "If a patient or former patient has invited the media to report his or her treatment, the NHS body may comment in public but should confine itself to factual information or the correction of any misleading assertions or published comment. The duty of confidence to the patient still applies." Number 10 says hospitals regularly release details when patients complain to local newspapers.

The length of time it took the members of Mrs Addis's family to visit her after she was taken into hospital.

Doubts have been expressed privately that the public concern of Mrs Addis's relatives was inconsistent with their failure to go to the Whittington before Tuesday. However, her daughter, Zena, said that she had been assured by the hospital that her mother's situation was not serious. Hence she did not believe the two-hour journey on public transport was necessary.

The implication that Mrs Addis was guilty of racism, in refusing to be treated by black nurses.

That appeared to be the suggestion when the hospital's clinical director said Mrs Addis did not want to be treated by "that kind of nurse". The family were outraged by the charge and the hospital went some way towards retracting it yesterday.

Woman says Tory MPs refused to help her in medical dispute

Gillian Mackenzie has complained to the Tory party

By Terri Judd

AFTER A year spent trying to persuade two Tory MPs to champion her case against the hospital where her mother died, a retired businesswoman has made a formal complaint to the Conservative Party.

Gillian Mackenzie insists Iain Duncan Smith's apparent campaigning verve is simply not mirrored by his parliamentary colleagues. Last night the two MPs denied her claims.

Mrs Mackenzie's 91-year-old mother went into Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1998 for four weeks' rehabilitation after a hip operation. She died 10 days later. Her daughter claims her death was due to medical negligence, a matter that Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust denies.

The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) is currently investigating the quality of care for the elderly at the Gosport hospital.

Mrs Mackenzie, 64, says that when she tried to enlist the support of the Gosport MP Peter Viggers, she was told "Westminster convention" prevented him becoming involved and she should contact her own MP in Sussex. Nigel Waterson, MP for Eastbourne, told her to wait for the CHI report.

Mrs Mackenzie said: "They have just been dismissive, totally dismissive. They should at least take a look at the papers. While I appreciate that Nigel Waterson is in a difficult position, Mr Viggers should take an interest in matters involving his own constituency."

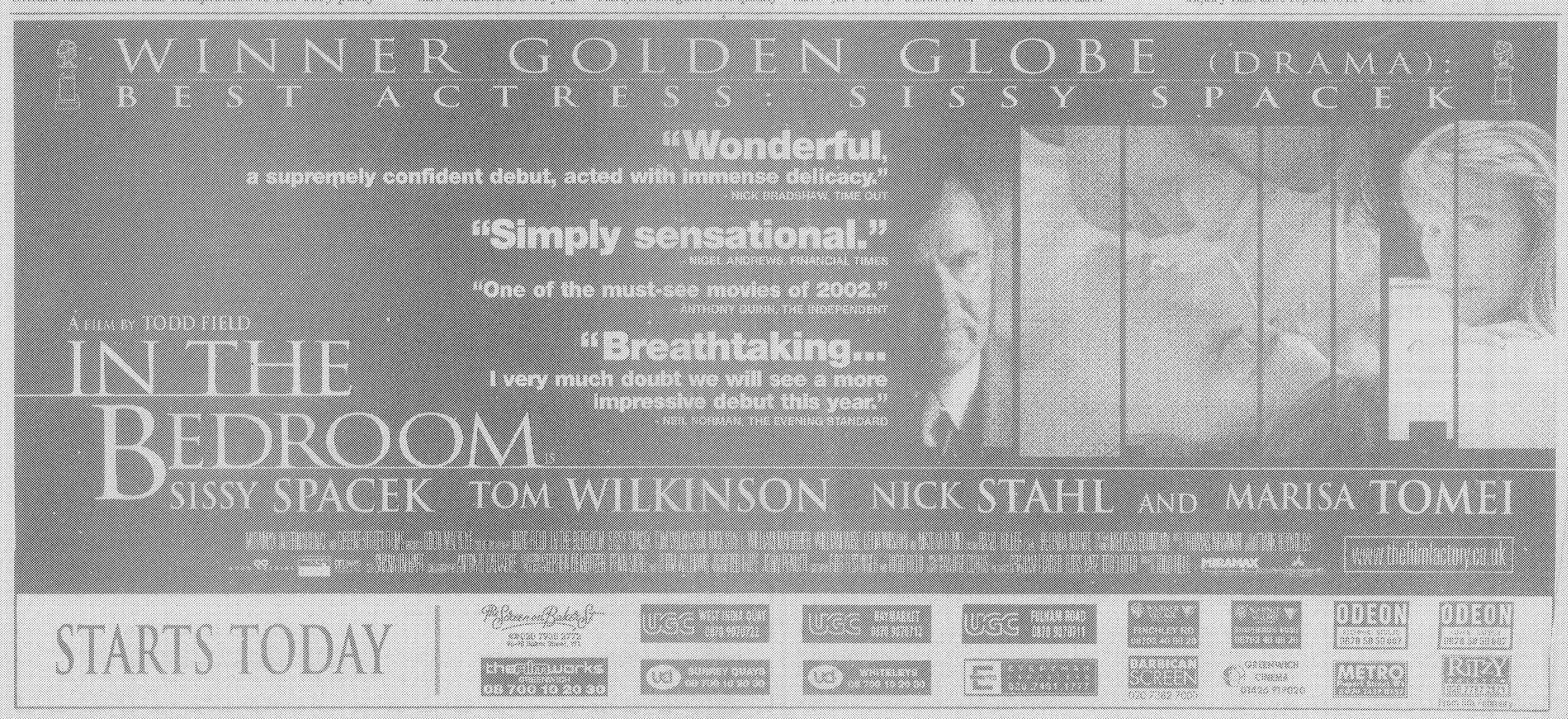
Mrs Mackenzie's mother, Gladys Richards, was transferred to the hospital on 11 August 1998, 12 days after a hip operation. Mrs Mackenzie alleges she was given incorrect medicine and care.

Mrs Mackenzie also turned to the local police. After two investigations the matter was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service, which found there was insufficient evidence.

Mr Waterson said: "There is absolutely no question of this constituent not being offered assistance. I have had some contact with Mrs Mackenzie and tried to be helpful. I am awaiting the outcome of this inquiry. Last time I spoke to her she seemed perfectly content and I am very surprised to hear to the contrary."

Mr Viggers said: "I have never had any complaint about Gosport War Memorial Hospital. The doctors are very dedicated."

Max Millett, the chief executive of the trust, said last night: "The CHI investigation is welcome. We want to reassure the public that the hospital offers a really good standard of care."



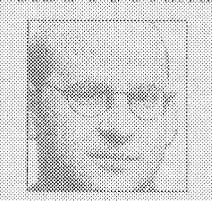
SPORT

Governing body fails to enforce rule protecting clubs against asset strippers as debt-ridden Third Division side prepare to face London fat cats

Peter Duffield, York's veteran striker, takes a break from training yesterday. He 'panicked for a week' when news of the club's precarious situation broke *Simon Wilkinson*

FA stays silent over York affair

INSIDE FOOTBALL



DAVID CONN

IN THE week when a children's story won the Whitbread Prize for fiction, anybody trying to make sense of the grown-up world of English football would find a knowledge of fairy-tales and fables quite useful. *Alice in Wonderland* and the *Emperor's New Clothes* would be particularly handy.

After sundry recent embarrassments, the Football Association announced it was to clean up the game, that its chief executive, Adam Crozier, would "crack down" on hooliganism and campaign for better standards from football's overpaid young players.

Yet faced with the York City chairman, who in 1999 formed a holding company specifically to bypass an FA rule designed to protect clubs from asset strippers, Crozier's FA is silent. The chairman, Douglas Craig, is now demanding £4.5m for the club and ground – for which he and fellow directors paid around £200,000 – or he will sell the ground, probably to property developers. If no buyer is found for the club, he will withdraw it from the Football League on April Fool's Day.

The FA's rule deters financial exploitation by providing that if a club is wound up and its assets sold, any surplus is not paid to shareholders, but to other sporting or charitable institutions. In 1999, Craig wrote to all York City shareholders asking them to approve a transfer of their shares and the club's Bootham Crescent ground to a holding company, Bootham Crescent Holdings, because, he argued, the FA's rule made York insecure, and could "adversely affect" their ability to remain at Bootham Crescent. The transfer went ahead and earlier this month Craig, citing mounting debts at the club, revealed his £4.5m asking price. The avoidance of the FA rule means that if the club is wound up and the ground sold, the estimated £3.5m surplus after paying off the club's creditors would be shared by Craig and his three fellow directors, John Quickfall, Colin Webb and the former playing stalwart Barry Swallow, who together own 94.1 per cent of the holding company.

This week I asked Paul Newman, the FA's head of communications, a series of questions about the FA's rule, sent also to Adam Crozier and the FA's lawyer, Nic Coward. I asked whether it is correct that their rule, 34 (b), is designed to protect clubs and their grounds and why Coward recommended only three years ago that the rule was necessary and valuable enough to be retained. I also asked: "What, in general, is the FA's view on clubs forming holding companies which take charge of all the club's assets but are free of your rules? Does it not make your rules effectively impossible to maintain?" These questions were not deemed worthy of a reply, of any kind. York supporters appealing for help have met the same silence.

This bizarre regulatory vacuum in football has been widely condemned. Alan Keen MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Football Group, said: "Football's biggest challenge is to protect clubs from asset strippers. The FA needs clear, strong, watertight rules, and to enforce them. This is ludicrous." Malcolm Clarke, chair of the Football Supporters' Association, said: "The York affair confirms our worst fears. We call upon the FA and the Minister for Sport to protect clubs – at least the FA should enforce the few rules it has."

The threat to York came in the same week as the first meeting of the Independent Football Commission, the game's new self-regulatory body. This follows the Government-appointed Football Task Force's tortuous inquiry into the running of the game, which produced a majority report in December 1999 calling for more robust regulation and a strengthened "Rule 34" to protect clubs. The football authorities refused to sign, and presented their own report, suggesting an IFC.

Now over two years later, the IFC has finally met. Its remit is to report on how the authorities govern the game. There are five members, the Conservative peer Lord Taylor, Labour MP Ann Taylor, Alan Watson, the deputy parliamentary ombudsman, Julian Wild, a commercial lawyer at Northern Foods, and John Willis, the former Channel 4 director of programmes and Ombudsman for *The Guardian*. The chairman, appointed after a controversial process – by a panel including the Premier League's own chief executive, Richard Scudamore – is Derek Fraser, the vice-chancellor of the University of Teesside.

Fraser said he understood that the IFC faces considerable scepticism, but said all the members are committed fans and none are being paid, and therefore have no vested interests. The IFC will report first on ticket prices, then merchandise, followed by a review of the FA's Financial Advisory Unit.

He said he could not comment on York City or on the formation of holding companies to avoid FA rules, but said the IFC would look generally at the FA's governance of football. He said: "I've heard all the criticism and people asking who this Derek Fraser is. But self-regulation works in other industries and we're determined to make a difference."

In York, fans have reacted with great purpose and will formally launch a Supporters' Trust a week today. The following day, 2 February, they have called for a "fans united" show of solidarity at the home match against Lincoln.

Already, together with the local council and a group of local businessmen, they have made an intelligent, constructive offer to Craig and his fellow directors. Councillor Alan Jones, the executive member for leisure, revealed that the group's offer does not approach £4.5m, but will repay the directors what they paid for their shares, possibly with some additional amount to recognise their work. The consortium will also clear York's debts, and guarantee running costs at least for next season, a total offer probably around £1.2m.

"We see it as community leadership to help maintain professional sport," Jones said. "It's very important that any new structure recognises the Supporters' Trust – the club belongs to supporters and the community."

Craig has spoken to two potential buyers, thought to be a housing developer and sports management company. But fans hope the local council's involvement with their bid will ward off developers, who will need planning permission if they want to demolish Bootham Crescent. Fans are still hoping Craig will listen and, as one said, "leave with honour intact".

He has not been contactable because, yet more bizarrely, he has been deciding the fate of another club, Wimbledon, whose request to move to Milton Keynes was turned down last August by the Football League.

Such is Craig's status as a football stalwart that the League chose him to sit on the three-man arbitration panel, effectively an appeal by Wimbledon, alongside David Dein, the vice-chairman of Arsenal, and Douglas Hollander QC.

The case, which turns on the fairness of the League's refusal, has been argued by QCs on both sides since Monday – legal costs are expected to exceed £500,000. The League steadfastly opposes "franchised football", but Wimbledon has pleaded that it needs the "revenue streams" from the move. The ruling is expected today.

Into this morass yesterday stepped Mohamed Al Fayed who has shrewdly exploited through Fulham the PR value of appearing as a football philanthropist. He has pledged to waive Fulham's share of the gate receipts from Saturday's FA Cup fourth-round tie at York, potentially worth £50,000. Craig turned him down.

Fayed offered the money to the Supporters' Trust, whose spokesperson, Sophie McGill, said: "In this era when football is often viewed in purely commercial terms, it is good to see there are individuals who still have the game's best interests at heart."

Which brings us back to *Alice in Wonderland* and the *Emperor's New Clothes*. On second thoughts, you couldn't make this up.

davidconn@freeuk.com

Duffield the warrior glad to battle on

Veteran striker hopes to lead beleaguered Minstermen to FA Cup glory against Fulham tomorrow. By **Tim Rich**

FOR YORK CITY, 26 January is a special day, the anniversary of one of the great upsets in the history of the FA Cup. Seventeen years ago, fans of Arsenal and York joined together to clear the snow from Bootham Crescent's pitch and several hours later a side boasting names like O'Leary, Sansom, Mariner, Woodcock and Nicholas had been beaten 1-0.

Tomorrow, they face another team of wealthy Londoners, Fulham, but this may be York's last Cup run. The chairman, Douglas Craig, has announced that if he cannot find a buyer, Bootham Crescent's gates will shut forever on 31 March and the club's 80-year history in the Football League will come to the most abrupt end.

Peter Duffield's football career seems to have been book-ended by crisis. On 26 January 1985, when Keith Houchen was sending York through to a fifth-round tie with Liverpool, Duffield was approaching 16 and was ready to sign a professional contract with Middlesbrough just in time to see the gates of Ayresome Park padlocked as the Teessiders slipped into bankruptcy.

"It was horrible because it was my home-town club," he recalled. "It was my dream to play for Middlesbrough. We were told one day to get our kit out of the laundry because they were locking the gates.

"We trained in local parks but we were very lucky in the reserve team we had, which became the first team when Middlesbrough went bust. There was Tony Mowbray, Gary Pallister, Stuart Ripley and Colin Cooper, who turned into million-pound players; you don't often get that from a single youth-team squad."

Duffield was released almost as soon as Boro clawed their way back to promotion. He was not alone in finding Bruce Rioch, the manager, an intimidating figure. "We weren't getting paid and I contacted the PFA about it. Maybe I should have gone to Bruce but I was frightened of him, so I didn't. I don't think he forgave me."

This, said Duffield, whose time leading the York attack has been wrecked by two broken legs, one suffered in a freak training-ground accident, was the difference between now and then. Despite the crisis, which is not primarily financial, York are honouring their contracts and when he suffered a second fracture, the club paid for his wife, Suzanne, to be put up in the York Hilton. "I nearly passed out again when she told me where she was staying because I couldn't imagine a Third Division club paying for that."

Even comparatively wealthy minor clubs, like Darlington, owned by the tycoon George Reynolds, cut corners. Duffield remembers the Third Division play-off final against Peterborough two years ago. "We travelled down by train on the day with the supporters, had a couple of hours' rest in the hotel and then took a coach to Wembley." Duffield hit the post but his team, exhausted, lost 1-0.

York is Duffield's 14th club and he has been around long enough to know that extinction is very rarely the end result even for teams in York's parlous state. He admits that when the news first broke he "panicked for a week". The main problem was that those in the dressing-room appeared to be the last to know. "The backroom staff, the management, the office girls had a meeting about the situation but the players weren't involved and that's what infuriated us.

"We were only getting what we were reading in the local paper. We eventually did have a meeting with the chairman; I wouldn't say it was positive but at least we were informed. There was a lot of talk about it but not so much now; maybe the Cup run has taken our minds off things."

'York isn't a footballing city, it's for students and tourists, but this has made people realise there is a club here'

Ironically, the demonstrations by the supporters have actively helped the players. "York isn't a footballing city, it's for students and tourists but what's happened has made them realise that there is a club here.

"Two months before this happened, they were getting on the manager's back but now they are supporting the players because they know we are all pulling in the same direction to drag the club out of this mess."

They may be alarmingly near the precipice that separates the Third Division from the Conference, but the Minstermen have shown they can perform when it matters. In the first and third rounds of the FA Cup they secured 0-0 draws at Colchester and Grimsby before winning replays. In between, Bootham Crescent witnessed perhaps their finest display of the season, a 2-0 victory over Reading.

"The fear is that we will be taken apart on Saturday but there is always someone who pulls a shock out. Our pitch is not good and we have to make sure we keep Fulham to the tempo of a Third Division game. Whatever happens, this Cup run has shown that the club does not belong to the chairman, the manager or the board of directors but the fans. It's their club."

Fletcher ponders recall of Thorpe and Caddick

CRICKET

By Stephen Brenkley in Madras

ENGLAND'S SELECTION headache for the third one-day international here today was probably aggravated by the management committee pinching themselves excessively. Fanciful as it may sound, the team are in the unprecedented position of being level at 1-1 in the series, having opted to do without two of their best players.

It may seem harsh to refer to Graham Thorpe and Andrew Caddick as having been dropped, but that is precisely what has happened. The coach, Duncan Fletcher, and the captain, Nasser Hussain, now have to decide whether to recall them to a winning team.

India had selection problems of their own, although, contrastingly, they may have seen it as an easy way out when their controversial, out-of-form captain, Sourav Ganguly, tweaked a hamstring in training. He was immediately sent for a scan, and rated doubtful for today's match and perhaps the rest of the series. Thorpe pulled out of England's team for the first game last Saturday with an upset stomach, was then omitted for the second and saw the men he would be most likely to replace score half-centuries. Caddick has been left out for both matches for an all-Yorkshire opening bowling partnership of Darren Gough and Matthew Hoggard, who have performed efficiently on batting pitches.

A month ago, perhaps even a week ago, it would have been unthinkable for England to take the field without a fit Thorpe and Caddick. They have been two of the principal architects of the Test team's revival and if Thorpe is England's most successful, experienced and versatile one-day batsman, Caddick has the best economy rate among the bowlers.

"It's the first time I've been in this position with England where we've got two quality players sitting on the bench and we've got to consider them for selection," Fletcher said. "Nasser and I have got a very difficult job to weigh up. The series is delicately poised and this game is very important." The selectors' thoughts on the matter were bound to be confused. Sooner or later, the pair are bound to return because their ability is obvious, so why not sooner? However, they also have to remain loyal to those who are doing well in their places and give them experience of playing at this level and in front of these crowds before the World Cup next year.

It says something more about the Hussain-Fletcher partnership – as if anything else needed to be said about their dramatic effect on the team – that they seem to have scented the new blood well. True, that is what selectors are for but that has not been invariably the case in England.

In Paul Collingwood, who made the top score of 71 in the second one-dayer on Tuesday, and Jeremy Snape, who is threatening to become the slowest bowler in world cricket and is so far one of the most unflappable, they have chosen wisely.

They are fit, hard-working and have an innate understanding of the team ethic. It is probably also the first time Fletcher has been in a position to say that he is in charge of a young England side.

"When we went to Zimbabwe [last autumn] we were probably the most inexperienced side in one-day internationals and if you totalled up all our caps we probably still are apart from Bangladesh," he said. "We're trying to get 40 games under the belt of each individual so at least we've got a minimum of 440 or 450 caps by the time we go into the World Cup, and we're going to struggle to do that."

Part of the calculation is balancing World Cup aspirations, which still should not be high after one win against India, with winning this series, while also maintaining the vigour and purposefulness in what is clearly a unified squad. Fletcher is a publicly dispassionate man, but he seems to see something in this side. As senior players, who have achieved much, Thorpe and Caddick will be crucial to it.

If Ganguly fails to make it for India, his likely replacement is Anil Kumble. Ganguly's injury might just mean the end of his tenure as captain. Rarely popular, fleetingly successful, he was appointed only for the first three matches of this series.

Thorpe: Versatile

ENGLAND (from): N Hussain (Essex, capt), N V Knight (Warwickshire), M E Trescothick (Somerset), M P Vaughan (Yorkshire), G P Thorpe (Surrey), A Flintoff (Lancashire), P D Collingwood (Durham), A F Giles (Warwickshire), J S Foster (Essex, wkt), D Gough (Yorkshire), M J Hoggard (Yorkshire), A R Caddick (Somerset), O A Shah (Middlesex), B C Hollioake (Surrey), J F Snape (Gloucestershire).

INDIA (from): S Ganguly (capt), S Tendulkar, V V S Laxman, V Sehwag, D Mongia, H Badani, A Ratra (wkt), S Bangar, J Srinath, A Kumble, A Agarkar, Z Khan, H Singh, S Singh.

Umpires: V S Chopra and D Sharma

Third umpire: S A Janab

Match referee: D Lindsay (SA)

England women suffer whitewash

By Adeja Singh in Popona

ENGLAND'S WOMEN fell to a 5-0 series defeat here yesterday by losing their final one-day international against India by six wickets.

Sussex's Caroline Atkins (53) and Lancashire's Arran Thompson built a solid foundation reaching 134 for the first wicket, before Atkins was run out by the India captain, Anjum Chopra. Thompson went on to make 65 with England finishing their innings on 180 for 6.

In reply, India's openers also produced a strong partnership with Anju Jain and Amrita Shinde reaching 117 before Jain was caught by Laura Newton off the bowling of Thompson. Amrita went on to score 73, as India reached their target with three overs remaining.

The England captain, Clare Connor, said: "The 5-0 result is fair, but a massive disappointment. I am proud of all the players who have toured, several making their debuts."

Scoreboard, Digest, page 27

Protest after Shoaib is hit by a brick

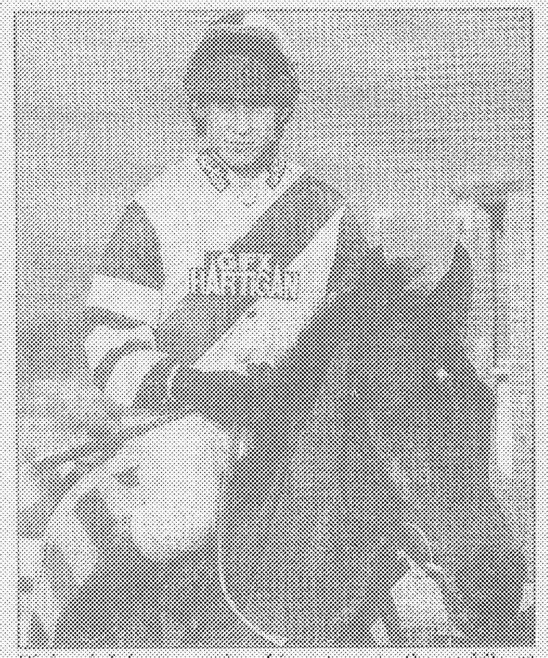
By Khaled Ahmed in Dhaka

THE PAKISTAN fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was hit by a piece of brick while fielding against Bangladesh in the second one-day international match here yesterday, prompting his team to leave the field in protest.

Shoaib, who had been fielding at cover, was taken to hospital after vomiting twice. He was discharged later and is expected to play today.

Bangladesh were 77 for 2 in reply to Pakistan's 281 for 5 at the time. Play was resumed 45 minutes later and Bangladesh finished on 209 for 6, 72 runs short of their target.

■ Nottinghamshire have agreed a three-year contract with Usman Afzaal. The 24-year-old's existing deal runs out at the end of the 2002 season.



Richard Johnson makes his return to the saddle at Plumpton yesterday on Balanak *Fiona Hanson/PA*

Sackville fails to hit standard

BY JOHN COBB

IRISH PROSPECTS of winning the Cheltenham Gold Cup in seven weeks' time took a severe knock yesterday when Sackville showed no sparkle in finishing a weary third in a three-mile hurdle at Gowran Park. The race had been picked as an easier option than tomorrow's Pillar Chase at Cheltenham and, to add to the ignominy, the winner of yesterday's race, Be My Belle, had lost her maiden status only last week.

Always struggling in the testing ground, Sackville, who was a 5-4 chance despite having her first race since early December, had to be pushed along inside the final mile. At the line, Be My Belle had three and a half lengths to spare over Boss Doyle with Sackville seven lengths adrift.

Frances Crowley, Sackville's trainer, clearly dismayed by the performance, offered the suggestion that the going had been the undoing of her charge, but the representatives of the leading bookmakers were unconvinced and all eased Sackville in Gold Cup betting.

David Casey said that Sackville hated the ground." Crowley said. "He needed the run, but was never enjoying it and you would have to be disappointed, although he is only just coming right again.

"The Hennessy (at Leopardstown a fortnight on Sunday) is still the plan unless we find something wrong with him after today's race."

One performer at Gowran to catch the bookmakers' attention was the Charlie Swan-trained Pilot's Second who won the featured Thyestes Chase and had his price for the Grand National cut to 50-1 from 100-1 by William Hill. The success will not have escaped the handicapper's attention, however, and though entries for the Aintree race were announced yesterday the weights are not finalised until after racing on 5 February and published three days later.

There are 146 entries for the 6 April race, a modern-day record that betters the 141 of 1984. Trainers and owners have clearly not been deterred by last year's farcical event on horrible ground when only two horses, Red Marauder and Smarty, completed the marathon trip without mishap.

Those two are being sent out of the trenches again in pursuit of the £600,000 prize, along with the winner in 2000, Papillon. Other leading chasers to hold entries are the King George winner Florida Pearl, First Gold, Behrajan, Marlborough and What's Up Boys. Notable absentees are Cyfor Malta, Foxchapel King and Take Control.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Hit And Run (Doncaster 2.00)
NB: Elegant Sprite (Folkestone 3.10)

Richard Johnson returned to action at Plumpton yesterday after being off the track since breaking his right leg in October. The leg, which contains a metal rod to strengthen the bone, was given a stern test by Johnson's only mount, Balanak, who required plenty of persuasion to finish fifth in the selling hurdle.

"I'm blowing more than I should but that was just what I needed," Johnson said. "It was probably better that I rode a horse who is a bit of a character."

Johnson will ride the useful novice chase prospect Dark'n Sharp at Doncaster today before going to Cheltenham tomorrow. "It will be nice to get back on to some top quality horses," the jockey added.

Today's class is supplied by Arctic Owl, winner of the 2000 Irish St Leger, who will attempt to establish his Champion Hurdle credentials when he makes his debut over jumps in the second division of the novices' hurdle at Doncaster.

CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP: 5-4 Best Mate, 4-1 Florida Pearl, 5-1 Looks Like Trouble, 10-1 First Gold, Behrajan, others.

PUNTERS' GUIDE

WEIGHT WATCHER · RACE TRENDS · 7-DAY WINNERS · HORSY TALKS · FAVOURITES · STABLE MOVERS · BIGGEST EARNERS · TRAINERS IN FORM · TRAINERS OUT OF FORM · JOCKEYS IN FORM · JOCKEYS OUT OF FORM

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SELENE'S NAP

Gun'N Roses II (Doncaster 2.20)

DONCASTER

HYPERION

12.30 Fireaway · 1.00 North Face · 1.30 Claymore · 2.00 Hit And Run · 2.30 RYALUX (nap) · 3.00 Mr Bossman (nb) · 3.30 Arctic Owl

JACKPOT MEETING

12.30 CUSWORTH NOVICE HURDLE (DIV 1) (CLASS D) £4,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £3,472

FORM GUIDE

1.00 SELBY CONDITIONALS' HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £3,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £2,755

FORM GUIDE

1.30 E.B.F NATIONAL HUNT NOVICE HURDLE (QUALIFIER) (CLASS D) £4,500 added 2m 4f Penalty Value £3,728

FORM GUIDE

2.00 DONCASTER SPONSORSHIP CLUB NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £6,000 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £4,124

FORM GUIDE

2.30 ERNIE PETERSON LIFETIME IN RACING HANDICAP CHASE (C) £9,000 2m 3f 110yds Penalty Value £6,377

FORM GUIDE

3.00 SANDALL BEAT NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £6,000 added 3m Penalty Value £4,390

FORM GUIDE

3.30 CUSWORTH NOVICE HURDLE (DIV 2) (CLASS D) £4,500 added 2m 110yds Penalty Value £3,472

FORM GUIDE

GUIDE TO THE RACECARD

FOLKESTONE

HYPERION

1.10 Flame Creek 1.40 Mont Misere 2.10 Another General 2.40 Copper Shell 3.10 Toncappagh 3.40 Ashbury Star

1.10 WESTENHANGER RAILWAY STATION NOVICE HDLE (E) £3,500 2m 1f 110yds

FORM VERDICT

1.40 WINTER HOSPITALITY PACKAGES NOVICE CHASE (D) £6,000 2m 5f

FORM VERDICT

2.10 STELLING MINNIS NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 6f 110yds

FORM VERDICT

2.40 WEST WOOD HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £4,500 added 2m

FORM VERDICT

3.10 CHILDREN UNDER 16 GO FREE HANDICAP CHASE (F) £4,500 3m 2f

FORM VERDICT

3.40 SIX MILE BOTTOM HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,500 2m 1f 110yds

FORM VERDICT

WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION

12.50 Democracy 1.20 Western Command 1.50 Foronlymo 2.20 Solomon's Mine 2.50 Hearthstead Pride 3.20 Just The Job Too 3.50 Magic Charm 4.20 Mysterium

12.50 LITTLEWOODS AMATEURS' HANDICAP (DIV 1) (F) £3,000 1m 1f 79yds

FORM VERDICT

1.20 LITTLEWOODS AMATEURS' HANDICAP (DIV 2) (F) £3,000 1m 1f 79yds

FORM VERDICT

1.50 LITTLEWOODS BET DIRECT CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 3YO 6f

FORM VERDICT

2.20 BETDIRECT.CO.UK HANDICAP (D) £7,500 3YO 1m 100yds

FORM VERDICT

2.50 BERNARD & VI'S ANNIVERSARY MAIDEN STAKES (D) £4,500 1m 100yds

FORM VERDICT

3.20 LITTLEWOODS BET DIRECT SELLING HANDICAP (DIV 1) (F) £3,000 1m 4f

FORM VERDICT

3.50 LITTLEWOODS BET DIRECT SELLING HANDICAP (DIV 2) (F) £3,000 1m 4f

FORM VERDICT

4.20 £5 MINIMUM STAKE ON 0800 329393 HANDICAP (CLASS D) £6,000 1m 4f

FORM VERDICT

Scruton likely to lose newspaper columnist job after exposure of financial link to tobacco firm

BY MARIE WOOLF AND DAVID LISTER

PROFESSOR ROGER SCRUTON, a Conservative philosopher, academic and writer, is expected to lose his job as a columnist with the *Financial Times* after he admitted taking money from the tobacco industry in return for placing pro-smoking stories in the British media.

Disappointed FT executives are likely to pull the plug on Professor Scruton's weekly country life column. He is under pressure to sever his links with Japan Tobacco which produces Camel cigarettes.

The right-wing thinker, a regular guest on the Radio 4 programme *The Moral Maze* and the former professor of aesthetics at Birkbeck College, London University, has defended the tobacco industry in articles in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*.

Yesterday he admitted that he and his wife, Sophie, are consultants to the company. Indeed, Japan Tobacco is the biggest client of the couple's consultancy, which they run from their Wiltshire home, receiving £4,500 a month.

Anti-tobacco groups are calling on Japan Tobacco to sever ties with Professor Scruton claiming he was "damaged goods" now that his financial ties had been exposed. Clive Bates, director of Action on Smoking and Health, said he would write to Professor Scruton and the cigarette manufacturer asking them to cease their financial relationship. "If he wants to be a credible commentator on issues of public morality, freedom of expression and individual choice, then there's no way he can work for a tobacco company at the same time," he said. "Japan Tobacco has now got damaged goods. Professor Scruton's cover is blown."

Last year, Professor Scruton published attacks on the World Health Organisation in a pamphlet for the Institute of Economic Affairs, and did not declare his links to the tobacco firm. He also proposed, in an e-mail to the company, that he could get articles promoting the tobacco industry's case in the national press.

"We would aim to place an article every two months in one or other of the WSJ (*Wall Street Journal*), *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Spectator*, the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *The Independent* or the *New Statesman*," the e-mail sent in October stated.

The memo suggested using lawyers, academics and Fleet Street contacts to attack the World Health Organisation's proposals to clamp down on cigarette firms. "We propose a more general attack on the absurdity of trivial and unworkable transnational legislation, at a time of global crisis," it said.

Professor Scruton told *The Independent*: "We do have a retainer from Japan Tobacco. It is not a secret at all. I'm not particularly keen on defending tobacco, but I am keen on defending freedom. What they are particularly paying us to do is to produce a briefing for tobacco companies about freedom. I am on the payroll of lots of things."

Professor Scruton, who is also a barrister, has tried to make members of the judicial system more sympathetic to tobacco firms' objections to paying smokers in a series of massive compensation claims. He says that Japan Tobacco should get "politicians to take up the cause".

Leaked e-mails show that last autumn the academic was angling for a £1,000 pay rise for his work to expand his operation and help pay for an assistant. One e-mail stated: "... we were wondering whether you would consider putting up the fee from £4,500 monthly to £5,500 on the assumption that we try our hardest to justify this amount, and you have the right to revise it downwards if dissatisfied. We think that we give good value for money in a business largely conducted by shysters and sharks, but you may not agree with this."

Roger Scruton has been a familiar face in the media as well as in academic circles for two decades. He is a prolific newspaper columnist and book reviewer. Newspaper databases show that since the mid-Nineties he has written 150 articles, almost all of them in the right-of-centre national newspapers. His subjects range from the delights of Englishness to the delights of learning the classics to the delights of fox hunting.

Curiously, it is under the guise of pondering on such global and moral conundrums that the delight and moral rectitude of smoking seem to have a habit of intruding.

Professor Scruton, the son of a left-wing Mancunian teacher, had his own political consciousness formed during the Paris riots of May 1968. He was in the Latin Quarter when students tore up the cobblestones to hurl at riot police. It was at that moment, he has recalled, that he realised he was "on the other side", a Conservative and not a Marxist.

Roger Scruton, the media-conscious Tory philosopher and academic, is under attack from anti-tobacco groups *John Lawrence*

THE WORDS OF ROGER SCRUTON

In 1997 in *The Times*: "Properly used, tobacco makes a real and positive contribution to health. It calms the nerves and imposes moments of rest and contemplation, it also equips people for the trials of social life by providing something which can be offered and accepted at any time of the day. It is from the American pipe of peace that we learnt to smoke. Our ancestors perceived the great moral and social benefits that the Indians obtained from this source, and were wise enough to bring it home with them."

Less than a year later in *The Times*: "Junkies are not just useless and burdensome; they have a tendency to slip out of communication with their kind, to become alien, destructive and unconscionable. No such effect can be witnessed in the smoker."

Last year in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Even the World Health Organisation, devoted to the seemingly blameless cause of helping the developing nations to overcome contagious diseases, spends far more time and energy trying to legislate against smokers. It now seeks to control the fiscal policy of national legislatures since nothing less than this will satisfy the anti-smoking fanatics who occupy its seat of power."

DAVID LISTER

Cigarette firms prepared to throw millions into public relations battle

BY MARIE WOOLF
Chief Political Correspondent

THE TOBACCO industry is one of the richest and most powerful lobbies in the world, with its financial tentacles reaching from politics to the media, the law and academia.

Global cigarette companies, the daily target of stories about tobacco's links to cancer and other diseases, now give high priority to employing experienced in-house public relations teams. They are prepared to throw millions of pounds at defending their reputations, and this has made their battle with the cancer charities and anti-smoking campaigners appear like a David and Goliath contest.

As well as slick PR teams employed by companies such as BAT and Philip Morris, the tobacco firms employ experienced political lobbyists to curry favour in Westminster, Brussels and Geneva, where the World Health Organisation has its base.

Philip Morris has employed the services of Burson-Marsteller, the public relations firm that has also worked for Monsanto and some of the world's most notorious polluters, including Exxon, responsible for the *Exxon Valdez* oil disaster.

The extent of the cigarette industry's influence reached the spotlight after Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One motor racing boss, paid £1m to the Labour Party, and motor racing, with the British Government's support, was given extra time to comply with an advertising ban.

Many politicians, including Kenneth Clarke, the former chancellor of the exchequer who is now an executive at BAT, have taken the tobacco dollar.

Academics such as Roger Scruton and scientists in the health field are employed to give intellectual weight to their arguments, while the best lawyers are on retainers to try to ensure that they succeed in court.

However, over the past 10 years the industry has faced an onslaught from the health lobby about the damaging health effects of tobacco, and has found it hard to outwit the small, agile health charities, which increasingly have the backing of politicians.

In the United States there have been a series of costly settlements designed to shut down claims from smokers whose health has been damaged. But these cases forced the release of millions of internal documents, which led to more damaging stories about how much tobacco companies knew of the health risks of smoking.

In Europe tobacco firms have succeeded in stalling plans for a ban on tobacco advertising, blocking a directive from Brussels in the courts.

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GOMA VOLCANO CHILDREN'S APPEAL

Terror has come to the people of Goma. But this time it is not ongoing civil war or bloodshed. Lava from a violent volcanic eruption has sent half a million people fleeing for their lives. At least 100,000 are small children, less than five years old.

The lava has destroyed their world. Many children have lost their homes. Some have even become separated from their parents in the panic. Without shelter, food or clean water, they are all at risk from disease and malnutrition.

To help them, UNICEF has already sent water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, tents, tarpaulins and blankets. Four therapeutic feeding centres have also been set up to treat malnutrition.

But more life-saving supplies are urgently needed. A donation of £35, for example, could buy a family kit containing essentials needed for survival. This could make the difference between life and death for these children.

They have lost everything. Please, help now.

THE GOMA VOLCANO CHILDREN'S APPEAL
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