



**THE BIG  
INTERVIEW**  
**DIANE  
SPENCER**

# DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE FINE!

BY MARTIN MCCONACHIE

IT'S pretty well known that the list of celebrity Yeovil Town fans is not the longest list you'll ever see. Cricketer Sir Ian Botham, comedian/musician Richard Digance and actors Trevor Peacock and James Purefoy are four of the more well-known ones. So the news that a fifth has come forward gives us great cause to celebrate.

Comedian Diane Spencer (they're not called comedienne anymore!) has recently shot to fame after winning the coveted Best Newcomer at the 2011 Chortle Awards. I spoke to her as she was preparing for her sold out Edinburgh Fringe Festival show 'All Pervading Madness'.

"Yes, I am most definitely a Glover," she confirms to me in a shrill, effervescent voice. "My mum and dad were both VP's at Huish Park and they still live in the area now, in a little village near Sherborne. I remember going from an early age; before the electronic scoreboard and the roof over the home end went up."

You get the feeling from talking to Diane that life seems to be full of fun. Her career has taken a huge change of direction more than once yet she handles it all with a happy, laughing nature that suggests she is really enjoying life at the moment, more so since that Chortle award. "That was a big thing, winning that. It tells people that they can take me seriously now; it's a kind of proof that I am capable of doing what I say I can do." The award came in February after members of the public were asked to vote. Her story was featured on the club's official website so those of you who voted, well done! "I'm currently writing a sitcom and I think the award

will help me when it's finished."

So what's the story about the woman just one letter away from having quite a famous name? "My family moved to Shepton Mallet when I was seven and I went to the Park School in Yeovil then Bruton School for Girls. Eventually we moved to Over Compton and I started going to Yeovil matches out of curiosity really. We used to all go as a family, the ground had a lovely atmosphere and we'd all go and share a big blanket there. My mum Carol is such an inspiration to me and she's an avid fan of Yeovil. No matter how bad things were, she always retained her positivity and would tell us 'Don't worry, we'll be fine' and that attitude has helped me through my comedy career too."

In the later days, you wouldn't see the Spencer family without their bedspread at games. No, don't worry; they'd not taken leave of their senses, just an idea from 'ever-positive' mum. "She took a big bed sheet and twisted some coat hangers into the word Y-E-O-V-I-L and sewed them on to the bed sheet. Then she put some green tinsel on them and voila! We had our own Yeovil flag."

Diane Spencer always seemed to



FUN: Diane on stage

be destined to be seen and be heard.

At an early nativity play, she became quite a prominent sheep after being passed over for the part of Mary. "I bleated so loud, no-one could hear Mary... I mean, who had ever heard of a ginger sheep?" She studied drama during her further education days and took up teaching including a spell at the Gryphon School, Sherborne. This particular part of her career ended when Diane emigrated to New Zealand, a life-changing move in more ways than one. "One night I wrote five minutes of original material and stood up and performed it and it went down well. I started doing more gigs, I started getting invitations to compere and MC nights and things went from there."

The New Zealand Comedy Guild loved her and awarded her Best Newcomer in 2007 and Best Female Comedian in 2009, recognition that helped her into the Edinburgh fringe with her solo show 'Lost in the Mouth Specific' which received four star reviews. She returned to the UK and is now recognised as one of the country's top female stand-up comedians. You'll need to book to see her to see what her show is like. A little bit risqué, a big bit rude; I guess her favourite sitcoms (*Bottom*, *South Park*, *Father Ted* and *Gimme Gimme Gimme*) would give you a clue as to where her sense of humour is.

We close the interview with one final chat about Yeovil. "The town is such a positive place, full of optimistic people," she enthuses. "I loved growing up in the area and going to the football there; it was so passionate and exciting."

Yeovil Town and Diane Spencer. As her mum would say: "Don't worry, we'll be fine!"