



Above: Film maker Scot Davidson looking over a script with Chee and (below) in the editing suite at Folly.

Already something of a 'player' in the film world, an ex-Lancaster grammar school boy is preparing to pass on some of the hard lessons he's learnt in a business where you always watch your back

Life through a lens

SOMEBODY who is no stranger to the machinations of the film world is Lancaster-based producer and director Chee Keong Cheung.

Forging a career in the movie industry is not for the faint-hearted, but over the last few years Chee and his partners in Intense Productions have certainly made an impact.

Currently the company is putting together a feature based on the life of one of Carl Jung's patients, with Douglas Henshall and Simon Callow lined up for major roles.

After learning the hard way how to manoeuvre the pitfalls of such a precarious business, Chee has decided to pass on some of his experience by way of a mentoring scheme in conjunction with Folly.

Script

And he has some invaluable advice for budding amateurs keen not to meet the same fate as Ed Wood, who ended his days writing porn novels for a living.

"A lot of people shoot themselves in the foot before they even get started," he tells me.

"Even simple things such as submitting a script in the right format and with the right font. If you don't get it right the first time, producers won't even consider your material the second time."

One person who will be hoping to keep on the right side of all-powerful 'players' is Scot Davidson from Morecambe, one of only five candidates selected to take part in the training scheme.

After finishing his studies for a BA Hons in Moving Images at university in Preston, Scot found himself at something of a loose end: "It was actually my brother who persuaded me to attend a talk given by Chee and it was probably the best advice I've ever had," says Scot.

"Even in such a short space of time it's



Intense Productions Ltd.



by Paul Collins

opened my eyes to what I'm capable of achieving.

"When I look back at the work I did at university I'm quite embarrassed by how amateurish some of it was."

By the end of the scheme Scot hopes to have produced two short films that he can use as a 'calling card' to sell himself onto other projects, or to get his own projects off the ground.

But Chee has been careful not to give his students any starry illusions about what they can expect once they get out into the real world.

As part of his job networking at festivals like Cannes, he has endured his fair share of film school wannabes who expect to have

movie projects handed to them on a plate. "You get people coming up to you at these places expecting you to finance a film based on a two-page idea. There's a lot of unrealistic expectations around and we stress that we can't guarantee that you will get work."

"What we can offer is a better understanding of how the industry works and provide contacts and introductions to people on film shoots."

Chee was immediately taken with Scot's focused attitude and, although there may have been more experienced candidates, he felt the ex-Morecambe High School pupil had more than most to gain from the course.

So is the film world really as ruthless as portrayed in Hollywood exposés such as *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* and *The Kid Stays in the Picture*?

"Undoubtedly there is an element of backstabbing," Chee confesses.

"You can be flavour of the month one minute and then completely forgotten about the next. Even if you make a first great film, if your follow-up isn't well received it could seriously hamper your chances of ever making another movie."

