

Get your eight page special
in tomorrow's Evening Post

www... whatwomenwant



FANS ALOT: Louise Stegalls with the Cape Fear award



FISHY BUSINESS: Devon Murray chooses his bait

MUM STARS AT US FILM AWARDS

BY CHARLES GRAHAM

A YOUNG Wigan mum's £50 stake in a hit movie landed her a starring role at a glitzy US awards ceremony.

Louise Stegalls collected two gongs at the Cape Fear Film Festival in North Carolina on account of being a producer of Chris Jones's mini-masterpiece *Gone Fishing*.

In fact, the 28-year-old from Swinley is one of 175 associate producers of the 10-minute drama and still hasn't met its Billinge-born director.

But her important contribution entitled her to represent him in North Carolina.

Her chance to rub shoulders with the stars of the Spiderman films came after Chris ran out of money and couldn't afford to go himself!

Although *Gone Fishing*, starring Bill Paterson, narrowly missed out on an Oscars shortlisting earlier this year, it has proved to be Chris's biggest film hit to date, collecting no fewer than 23 awards, many of them in America.

Chris, who is also the author of several successful books about making movies on a shoestring, not only caught the critics' and audiences' imagination with *Gone Fishing* itself, but also the way it was funded.

When embarking on the project he appealed for people to chip in £50 each to help the low-budget but quality production and get their names on the end credits.

Freelance journalist Louise was one of those contributors, being inspired to stump up the cash after



STRONG CAST: Bill Paterson and James Wilson go fishing



BOYS' DREAMS: James Wilson, young star of *Gone Fishing*

reading about Chris's idea in the Wigan Evening Post.

The success of the film has seen Chris jetting across the world to collect prizes, usually at his own expense.

So, a combination of fund shortages and the desire to crack on with new projects prompted him to appeal for volunteers among his associate producers to attend award ceremonies on his behalf.

Louise said: "I love America. I've been a few times and am always looking for excuses to go again, so when this request for someone to go to the Cape Fear festival came, I leapt at the chance."

"I think *Gone Fishing* is a wonderful film. It manages to have you crying and laughing at the same time and I am very proud to have had any involvement in it at all.

"I had to pay for my own flight but I was given accommodation, shared

the stage with Joe Manganiello who plays Flash Thompson in *Spiderman*, and it was all very worthwhile.

"It got best faith-based film and the audience choice award.

"It's weird that while I have now spoken to Chris several times on the phone, I still haven't met him. I'll have to now though because I have two trophies to hand over!"

"It has been the best £50 I have ever spent and it was very nice to be basking in Chris's reflected glory."

Chris said: "We may have missed out on an Oscar but *Gone Fishing* really has proved to be a hit, particularly in the US. I've been to America, Australia, Japan and places in between to collect awards but there comes a point in the budget movie business when you get short of funds.

"I put out an appeal to associate producers to fill in at ceremonies for me and Louise volunteered."