

The rock doc from down under

Like most medical students we at *MS* garner most of our medical knowledge through watching *Neighbours* and learning from the living legend that is Dr Karl Kennedy. Read on for our exclusive interview with Alan Fletcher ahead of his band's forthcoming UK tour!



Ferras Alwan
Consultant Editor

DR KARL Kennedy is probably the closest thing you can get to a medical celebrity, which is odd because he's not actually real. Seriously. Alan Fletcher however, the actor who plays him in *Neighbours* IS real. With me so far? He also happens to be a very nice man who we interviewed for *MS* in June 2006 when he was over here on a nationwide tour with his band, *Waiting Room*. We at *MS* regard Fletch as a close personal friend of ours so we weren't surprised to hear that he wanted to talk to us again ahead of *Waiting Room's* latest tour of the UK.

(FA) Things must be pretty hectic right now!

(AF) Yeah we're doing a three week tour, playing eight gigs so it's pretty busy.

(FA) Where are you playing?

(AF) Oh we're all over the place Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, been to Belfast, we're in Sheffield tonight, Brighton, Aberystwyth, and in London we're playing the Carling academy in Islington, a really good bona fida rock n roll interview and we've brought our drummer along this time so we should have a really good heavy rock and roll sound this time, really rock the place out.

(FA) Last time we spoke you mentioned some of the student favourites you were playing, what have you got in store this time?

Fletch with the MS team when we spoke to him in June.



(AF) We're doing a bit of Foo Fighters, a bit of the Killers, the new Kaiser Chiefs song, a bit of Franz Ferdinand. It should be a nice mix, plus we've got a few of our own songs in there as well.

(FA) Any Oodles and Noodles tracks in there?

(AF) No Oodles and Noodles, in Belfast last night I offered to do one, the crowd thought it would be a fantastic idea but the band haven't learnt the Oodles and Noodles stuff so I'll have to teach them. I'm gonna actually wait until we do the Oodles and Noodles world tour, coming to a crèche near you!

(FA) What was Last album you bought?

(AF) The Strokes, yup that was the last one I downloaded.

(FA) When we last spoke in June we talked about what music you're into but it was all pretty cool - you must have some embarrassing secrets you like listening to?

(AF) Oh I listen to some cheesy stuff. I do listen to a fair bit of Michael Buble as well, one of my bandmates Tommy Rando has just put out an album which is actually very good and one of the other guys in the band, Chris Hawker has just released an EP which is also really good. Yeah, we're good at listening to our own music! I do like a bit of cheese though, a bit of build me up buttercup or something or a bit of Elvis for a lark. Every now and again I might even be tempted to listen to a bit of Rolf Harris, do you remember Rolf's song two little boys? Used to make me cry, still does...

(FA) So

when you're on tour what do you demand in your rider when you play?

(AF) We demand MnMs and if there are any green ones we trash the hotel room. No it's very simple, we only ask for water, sambuca and beers.....and a little extra sambuca.

(FA) And so this tour will finish just before Christmas?

(AF) I've got to go back for one week to film *Neighbours* and then I have Christmas Day then I do a few concerts with the Australian Pop Orchestra touring Australia and then I jump back onto a plane on New Year's Day to do the ITV show *Soap Star Superstars* starting in early January.

(FA) We've not heard about this before, tell us more.

(AF) It's the second of a series, they did it last year, basically they take eleven actors who work on well known soap dramas and they have a sort of Pop Idol sing-off where the public vote who stays on. So I'll need a lot of public support for that one!

(FA) What can't you live without on tour?

(AF) My computer man! We'd be killed without it, we're all on macintoshes, all four of us, we run around with our macs and basically wherever we go we're rushing around to find Wifi hotspots and internet connection spots! I'm always dealing with stuff on the web so we have to have access to email.

(FA) A lot of the Neighbours cast do panto at this time of year, it sounds like you don't have time for

that?

(AF) No, I've done four pantos but I haven't done one for quite some time, the band takes up all the time I have off from *Neighbours* now

(FA) You're in the UK on a regular basis, are there any places you try to visit whenever over?

(AF) I love to go to

line about Boyd's brain tumour, I do pick up little bits but I don't make it my policy to retain any information because if I did I

(FA) You must get some weird requests from fans.

(AF) Mine are pretty sane to be honest with you, some get pretty carried away, we get a lot of screaming and jumping up and down and stuff but I've never had anyone really out of control. The only one that alarmed me a little bit was there was this bloke who

Sheffield,

it's almost like a home town to me, and I've been there so many times. I really like the vibe of the place particularly the music. A lot of students there too, there's almost 40,000 students. Liverpool's the place I always want to get to - it's where my football team plays of course and I've close connections there with the charity I'll be supporting on *Soap Star Superstars*, the Linda McCartney Centre so there's a million reasons for me to come to Liverpool whenever I can.

(FA) Since we last spoke Karl's started working a couple of extra medical specialties - have you learnt any new medical facts?

(AF) Well I know that angioblastic T-cell lymphoma kills! No, I learnt a lot about strokes during the recent story-

might be tempted to use it on somebody and end up in jail!

(FA) But you've been in Neighbours for a while; there must be some storylines you've not enjoyed?

(AF) Jeez! My policy when I work on *Neighbours* is they hand me a storyline and I see it as my job to make it as interesting as I can. Nothing jumps out at me as "Christ, I can't wait for this one to be over" and a lot of times the storylines are pretty short and run concurrently with other stuff as well so you know, it's never too gruesome.

(FA) Can you give our readers a Neighbours spoiler?

(AF) Yeah well keep an eye on Dr Karl because he becomes a bit disenchanted with medicine actually so for a little while you might see Dr Karl go through a bit of change of life

(FA) What's been your biggest extravagance of late?

(AF) Oooh, the biggest splurge was probably, I bought myself an almost brand new car, a Saab 9-5 aero and up in till then I'd never bought a car for more than \$20,000 Australian Dollars and this one was like three times that amount so that was probably the biggest indulgence of my life. I mean the most expensive thing I ever did was getting married but you know.

(FA) And what was breakfast?

(AF) Continental breakfast, yoghurt, ham, cheese, bit of toast and some prunes - I'd gone to bed at 3am and woke up at 10m so was pretty hungry by then!

DR. KARL KENNEDY
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You!
have an appointment on
Tuesday 12th DAY at 7.00 PM, MONTH

to see Alan Fletcher, aka Dr Karl Kennedy, and his band
WAITING ROOM
Supporting the doctor, Kirsty Crawford will see you before the show
NEAREST TUBE: ANGEL (NORTHERN LINE BANK BRANCH)

WIN A CHANCE TO MEET DR KARL!!!

Waiting Room play the Carling Academy on the 12th December and we have tickets for two lucky *MS* readers - who'll also get the chance of a private audience with the man himself, Alan Fletcher!

For a chance to win just answer this question:
Karl has three children on *Neighbours*. Name them.

Email answers to ej@medical-student.co.uk by the 8th December. The editor's decision is final.