



## Chasing dreams: banking on the future

*Lady Godiva* is the first feature-length film by Vicky Jewson. At just 21 years of age, this is one lady to keep your eye on.

**B**y the time one reaches the age of 21, there are certain milestones that should have been passed: learning to drive, learning to drink, losing one's virginity, writing and directing your first feature film... well, maybe not that last one. While not wishing to speculate on the first three, it is safe to say that Vicky Jewson is one of a very exclusive club of 21-year-old film directors.

"I've always loved telling stories," she says, "When I was seven I grabbed my dad's video camera and made some quite horrifically bad short films, then as I got older in the summer holidays I'd get all my friends to stay at my house and we'd make 40-minute mini-features."

Vicky's first foray into feature-length is a modern re-imagining of the Lady Godiva legend, re-written as a quirky romantic comedy. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Oxford, the film sees Jemima Honey/Lady Godiva (Phoebe Thomas) ride across the city's famous Magdalen Bridge to the tune of *The Way You Make Me Feel* by Michael Jackson.

"When I researched the legend I found that it was about taxes," says Jewson, "I didn't have enough finance to make a historical drama, and if it was about taxes — well, no-one would want to see it, would they?"

Godiva's original cause of reducing taxes is replaced by the more audience-friendly aiding a charity art space for troubled children.

"My hairdresser told me about a charity in Oxford called the Art Room, which the art factory is based on. It's an amazing place where children can get away from the world and create art — I thought, if Jemima's going to have a cause to fight for, what could be better than this?"

Winner of the Arts and Media Woman of the Future Award 2006, Jewson cites determination as the most essential tool for success.

"To fund *Lady Godiva*, I took out a huge bank loan and blew it all on a one-night do, to pitch to 90 investors. That night I raised £400,000 and over the following weeks that grew to £700,000 — the budget for the film."

The film blends romance, comedy and drama to create an endearing movie with something for everybody — including, of course, a bit of tasteful nudity.

"The actresses we spoke to for the role were more apprehensive than the models, because of the nudity involved," says Jewson, "but without that scene we wouldn't have a film."

Jewson is concerned with the issue of making British blockbusters: "The British film industry fails to encourage commercial films. It's almost not the done thing to make a commercial film. My film is to entertain the masses, because of that I've met this wall of criticism."

So what's next for the enterprising young filmmaker?

"I'm working on a new concept called the mini blockbuster. It's about stripping a story down, so that you are left with just the skeleton of a great film — so it's relatively cheap to make, but still has the capacity to make money and for people to want to see it."

Jewson lives for filmmaking, and you can hear her boundless enthusiasm in her voice. "Being on set is definitely my favourite part of the process," she says, "It's what gets you up in the morning, everyone striving for the same thing, telling a story."

*Lady Godiva* was premiered on Oxford's Morden Street. "We had a pink carpet instead of a red one, and horses and carts instead of limousines!" With such talent, passion and professionalism at such a young age, Jewson is surely destined for great things.

*Lady Godiva* is out now. For more details please see: [www.ladygodiva-oxford.com](http://www.ladygodiva-oxford.com).