

## LEGEND'S HOSPITAL TRIBUTE

## Smeato's heroes



## JOHN HAILS LIFESAVERS

**AIRPORT legend John Smeaton yesterday hailed the hero hospital staff who saved him from certain death.**

**EXCLUSIVE by MATT BENDORIS**

back to health. There's not many countries that would do that without taking a penny.

*"It makes you proud of our brilliant NHS and of Great Britain. I'm so lucky I live here."*

Scottish Sun columnist Smeato, 32, is due to be discharged today – one day short of a month after he was rushed in. And he said: "First thing on the list is a McDonald's burger.

The nurses tended his every need – and the quick thinking of Dr John Dickson, left, saved John's life after his near-fatal asthma attack.

The medic put Smeato on TWO life support machines in a procedure never tried before in Scotland on an asthmatic, and last night John said: "He's my hero."

Thanking the staff who cared for him at Paisley's Royal Alexandra Hospital, Renfrewshire, he added: "The NHS always gets a kicking, but I have nothing but praise. They not only saved my life, they nursed me

Next a pint of Magner's cider. And last but not least a haircut – this barnet is out of control."

Ward manager Anne-Marie Beggie, 38, has treated Smeato FOUR times for asthma. She said: "This has been his worst attack. He's a very lucky boy."

Hero John, from Erskine, Renfrewshire – yesterday sporting pyjamas showing Stewie from TV's Family Guy – nearly died when his body began to poison itself as he lay in a coma.

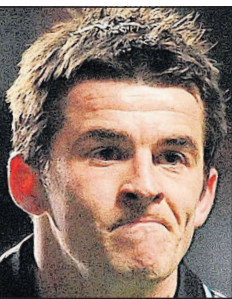
Dangerous levels of carbon dioxide had started to build, his brain swelled and his kidneys and lungs began to fail. Dr Dickson, 47, said: "John had a very severe asthma attack – the most serious I've seen in 23 years."

*He made a last ditch attempt to save Smeato, putting him on a second ventilator. The doctor said: "It's never been done on an asthmatic. I wasn't sure it'd work – fortunately it did."*

Smeato – who famously "set about" alleged Glasgow Airport terrorists – even had GORDON BROWN phone hospital staff to see how he was doing. Dr Dickson joked: "There was no pressure there then!"

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Happy days . . . Smeato, in cartoon PJs, hugs Dr Dickson



Thug . . . Barton

## Barton in 'big lips' race row

**EXCLUSIVE**  
By ROBIN PERRIE

SOCCER thug Joey Barton was yesterday accused of calling a black player "big lips" during a bust-up.

The Newcastle United midfielder – who vowed to be a "role model" after his jail release – was seen by millions on TV having a row with Aston Villa ace Gabriel Agbonlahor, 21.

Barton, 26, flicked the Villa player's lips during the spat on Monday night when Newcastle won 2-0.

Yesterday angry viewers accused him of racially abusing British-born Agbonlahor.

Guy Bradley, 37, was outraged after seeing the bust-up on Setanta. The restaurateur, of Beaconsfield, Bucks, said: "You can see Barton saying something, it looks like he's saying 'big lips'."

Lip reading expert Terry Ruane said Barton appeared to say 'f\*\*k your big lips'.

After the match Barton insisted: "We shook hands after the game."

He was released from jail in the summer after serving 74 days of a six month sentence for a drunken assault.

The Sun Says – Page Eight

**Sun**

**CLUMSY** thieves blasted open a safe – and destroyed £300,000 in cash after getting the explosive fuze wrong, in Fucecchio, Italy.

**SPOT**



**HAVE A LAUGH!**

WITH Omid DJALILI

**IRANIANS, Greeks and Turks are all very similar. We only differ in our levels of tax evasion.**

**AL-QAEDA** – putting the "mental" back into fundamentalism.

**DESSERT PRINCE**

Prince Charles launched his luxury mince pie and pudding range at The Highgrove Shop in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, yesterday.