

**ILLEGAL:** immigrant is 'not high up' in drug chain

# Peasant cannabis farmer sent to jail

THOM AIRS

A PEASANT farmer "beholden to those who brought him to this country" illegally has been jailed after admitting involvement in two Reading cannabis factories.

Vietnam-born Phi Tran, of no fixed address, was traced to £48,300 worth of drugs in properties in De Beauvoir Road, East Reading, and Bideford Close, Woodley, from fingerprints left on a packet of cigarettes and a bottle of water.

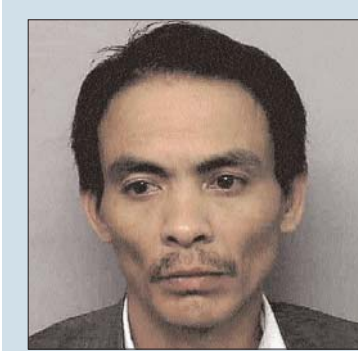
At Oxford Crown Court last Monday he admitted two counts of being concerned in the production of Class C drugs by another.

On September 7, 2007, police found 421 plants at a four-bedroom property in De Beauvoir Road and on November 14, 2007, a raid uncovered 824 plants at a three-storey town house in Bideford Close.

Tran, 41, was arrested in Berkshire in May and was found carrying £570 in cash.

Justine Davidge, prosecuting, said both houses were rented to people other than Tran, but he had been involved in the running of the cannabis factories.

She said of the house in De



'IN BONDAGE': Phi Tran

Beauvoir Road: "Two rooms on the ground floor and four rooms upstairs were full of cannabis plants.

"It seems like it had been going on for some weeks at least.

"Scenes-of-crime officers found a packet of Marlboro cigarettes that had been in the kitchen that had a fingerprint which was traced to Mr Tran."

Miss Davidge said of the Bideford Close house: "Police found cannabis on all three levels of the property.

"Mr Tran was again linked by a fingerprint, found on a water bottle in the kitchen."

Jemima Ivens, defending, said:

"Mr Tran is a man who entered this country illegally.

"Ostensibly he is in bondage to those who facilitated his entry.

"He works for small weekly amounts, he's not in control of his life and effectively does what he is told.

"He is not high up in the hierarchy and not somebody who sets up the factories or enjoys the high amounts they generate.

"He is a poor peasant farmer beholden to those who brought him to this country."

Sentencing Tran to three-and-a-half years' jail, minus the 165 days he has already served in custody since his arrest, Judge Julian Hall said: "Such factories exist so that people higher up the chain can make a lot of money, and we do our best to try and stop that happening.

"You shouldn't be here and it's clear that after the factory was found on September 7, 2007, within seven or eight weeks, you were doing precisely the same at another factory in a different part of Reading."

Judge Hall recommended Tran be deported at the end of his sentence and ordered the cash found be paid to the court.

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**BURNING OFF THE CAKES:** Power of Pilates boss Claire Roberts with one of her classes and, below, Hayley Scott  
Picture: STEVE SMYTH (Ref 93709)

## Class feel the power of pink

FIT folk were pink in the face after working out for breast cancer.

Students and instructors at Power of Pilates wore something pink to support the 'Wear it Pink' campaign.

One enthusiastic pupil went even further by completing the class wearing a giant pink baby romper suit.

The studio in Chalfont Court, Lower Earley, was decorated with streamers and balloons to become a pink grotto.

A volunteer from each class baked cakes and all the extras were dished out to corporate clients.

Owner Claire Roberts said she was



delighted with the £350 raised so far. "The classes have really enjoyed taking part and I feel incredibly lucky to have had such wonderful support from them for this event," she said.

## Festive fare at hotel

**STREATLEY Hill Pre-School Group will be holding a Christmas shopping night tomorrow from 7.30pm to 10.30pm. The event, at The Swan**

**at Streatley hotel, will offer high quality and unique gifts. Entrance is £1.50 and all proceeds will go to the pre-school.**

ADVERT NOT FOUND

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Revision: 0

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Name: Novotel Reading Cent

ADVERT NOT FOUND

Urn: 0035994

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Name: Altwood Tiles