John Major's Son in an Affair at the White Swan

ELAINE'S PARENTS TOASTED AFFAIR AT THE PUB

By JOHN ASKILL and TRACEY KANDOHLA

JAMES Major's affair with married Elaine Jordache was toasted by her parents when they all met up for a cosy night in a village pub, it emerged yesterday.

James, 20, was part of the family when he joined his "in-laws" and other relatives for celebration drinks.

Elaine's mum and dad gave the Prime Minister's son their seal of approval after he drove 120 miles to meet them at the pub right opposite her rented cottage. And last night it was revealed the romance also has the blessing of Premier John Major and bosses at Marks and Spencer, where James and Elaine both work.

EXCLUSIVE

James told his dad all about his plans to go on holiday to France with Elaine, 32, who is in the middle of a messy divorce.

The PM would have been briefed anyway by security chiefs who monitor James's movements.

And M&S said the couple's relationship did not break the company's strict code of conduct because they are based in different stores. A spokesman said: "All we are interested in is what they do at work." James's get-together with Elaine's parents John and Elanor Faulkener was revealed after the pair returned from their lovey-dovey French holiday.

Six-footer James has been a familiar sight at the Old White Swan in Newbold Verdon, Leics, for three months.

Kissing

He plays pool with regulars and spends "night after night" supping strong Stella Artois lager.

The pub is 12 miles from the flagship store in Fosse Park, Leicester, where Elaine is deputy manager. And last night bar staff told how the pair always acted "like any other couple in love."

Barmaid Lynne Davies, 24, said: "We never saw them kissing and cuddling but they were obviously very close.

"One night they came in with a couple she introduced as her parents. Elaine's brother and his girlfriend were also with them and they seemed like one big happy family."

James travelled to see Elaine from Norwich, where he is now based with M&S, almost every weekend.

Villagers began to play a game of "Spot the Major" when they thought they recognised the man arriving at her cottage in his Ford Mondeo. Lynne, whose dad Colin is the Old White Swan's landlord, added: "I clocked him straight away when he first started coming in. I told everyone I thought he was James Major.

"I recognised him from photographs in the paper.

"He was always very friendly and would be casually dressed. He was drinking pints of Stella Artois. That's strong stuff — it sorts out men from boys.

Wobbly

"We got chatting to him and Elaine and he introduced himself just as 'James'.

"He said he was 24 and she was 28 — I don't know whether they were trying to put us off the trail of recognising who they were. They have always looked so happy together. One night she'd had a little bit too much and her legs went very wobbly.

"James was very supportive — because he had to help her across the road to her home!"

Two weeks ago Elaine told regulars she and James were going away "on holiday" together, but did not say where.

A village shopkeeper said: "They've never made any fuss about who they were. They just seem very fond of each other."

Yesterday M&S corporate affairs spokesman Brian Huspith said: "We do not encourage couples who are married or having a relationship to be in the same store. But James works in Norwich and Elaine in Leicester. We have no qualms about their performances at work."

M&S security guards yesterday threw an "exclusion zone" around Elaine's store to deter the Press and threatened to clamp parked cars.

One guard told journalists: "You're not coming in. If we catch any reporter or photographer they will be escorted off the premises."

Staff at the Leicester and Norwich branches have been banned from talking about the couple, who met when they were both based at the company's store in Cambridge.

But one shop girl told The Sun: "I don't know why they've bothered hiding it. We all knew they were lovers."

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Cosy nights inn . . . James and Elaine are regulars at the Old White Swan pub in Newbold Verdon

Romance in store . . . James and Elaine, in M & S uniform, met at work

October 1993: James joins M & S as a trainee manager at Cambridge where he has an immediate crush on boss Elaine.

February 1994: Elaine confesses to pals she and husband Michael are having marriage problems.

August: Neighbours in Great Granden, Cambs, hear shouting and screaming soon after the Johnsons move in next door. Friends.

Oct: Michael finds his wife in clinch with James during pyjama party at their house. He and James row, but James refuses to leave. That month, Elaine begins divorce proceedings and moves out.

December: Michael confronts Elaine and James after finding them snuggled together in a pub.

Christmas: James and Elaine, by now lovers, make no attempt to disguise their affection for each other at parties. **January 1995**: Michael discovers Elaine has been ringing James several times a day on the couple's shared mobile phone. Elaine tells store staff to stop gossiping about her and James.

February: Michael tells Sunday newspaper James wrecked his marriage. M & S sends Elaine to Fosse Park, Leics, and James to Peterborough to separate them. Elaine moves into hotel in false name. Major denies affair — but is then caught leaving hotel, booking cab in false name.

March: Major moves to Norwich.

April: Elaine moves into rented cottage in Newbold Verdon, Leics.

May: James's car spotted outside cottage. Couple visit local pub.

June: James takes Elaine's parents for drink at the pub.

July: Couple spotted returning to Heathrow from South of France.