

TRAGEDY OF A SEX CHANGE STRIPPER

Pat could never forget that she was born a man

By MARTYN SHARPE

CURVY stripper Pat Birch wowed stag night audiences at a country club . . . but she nursed a heartbreak secret that finally killed her.

For big, blonde Pat was born a man—and she was haunted by the sex change operation that had transformed her life.

Even though she fell in love with a welder and went to live with him, she could not overcome doubts that she might still be male herself.

Her torment led her to kill herself with a drug overdose, an inquest heard yesterday.

She was found dead in bed by her common-law husband Maxwell Birch.

Pat's secret was only known to a few close friends.

Mr Birch told the inquest at Chesterfield, Derbyshire:

"She felt since her sex-change operation that she had neither the status of a man or a woman."

Addict

The inquest heard that 49-year-old Pat — born Patrick Read—was addicted to barbiturates.

She had worked under the name of Stella van Doren, but gave up stripping because Mr Birch "wasn't keen" on it.

Pathologist Dr Peter Gray said a post-mortem examination failed to establish Pat's sex.

Recording a suicide verdict, coroner Michael Swanwick declared: "She was evidently depressed, feeling she was neither one thing nor the other. It must have preyed on her mind to a very large extent."

The former owner of the country club where Pat worked — businessman Tommy Loftus — said later:

"She was absolutely a knock-out with the customers — a wow.

"She told me she'd had an operation in London — but I kept it a secret.

"As far as I know no one else knew other than her very close friends."

Shock

He added:

"She was a very big girl, very well endowed."

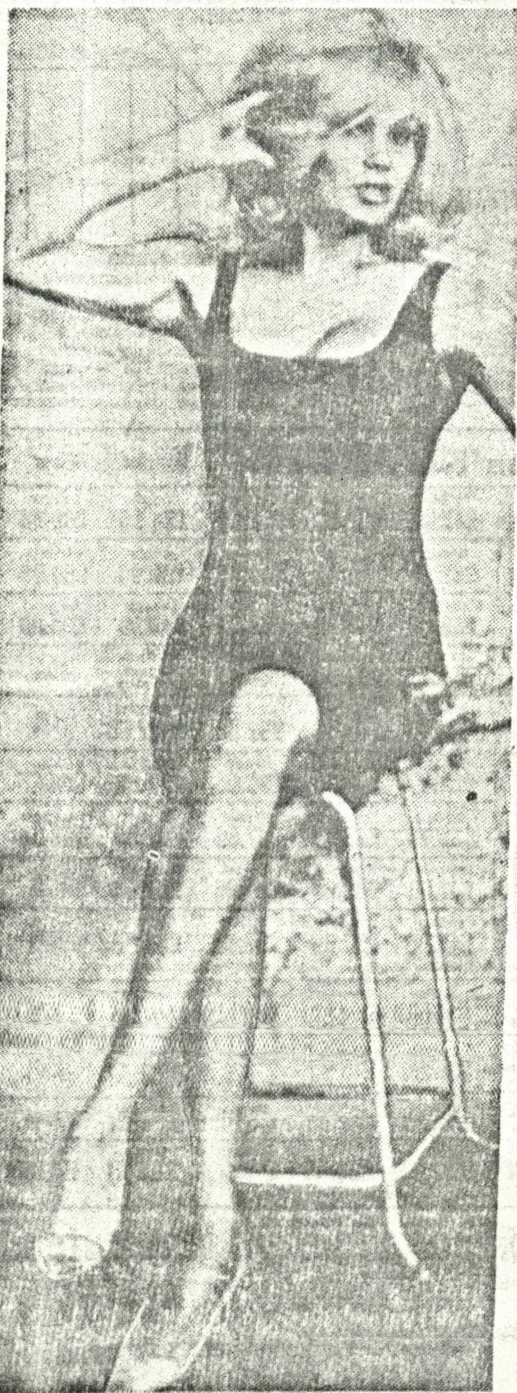
A neighbour said: "Pat's secret has come as a great shock.

"We always thought she was a gorgeous girl — and a very nice person.

"I had no idea about her being a man before."

In the eyes of the law, Pat remained a man.

Her death certificate is made out in the name Patrick Read — otherwise



Blonde stripper Pat . . . she kept the heartbreak secret until it finally killed her