

Never mind the quality

THE Edinburgh-based Scotsman newspaper has only a small circulation.

But it likes to see itself as a serious and important quality paper.

In reality, however, it talks a load of twaddle.

The Sun beat every other paper to Scotland's top story last week.

We revealed how a man suspected of the Fettes police HQ break-in, conned top QC William Nimmo Smith into spilling the beans on his probe into an alleged gay ring in top legal circles.

We can understand The Scotsman's frustration at missing a story which happened on its own doorstep.

But what is beyond belief is the way the paper attacks us in an editorial.

It claims we "gleefully drove a coach and horses" through newspaper ethics.

It talks of misrepresentation and subterfuge.

Scandal

It suggests our story was worthless, and The Sun and the suspect somehow plotted to undermine Mr Nimmo Smith.

Just what sort of a dreamland do these people live in?

Our story dealt with a scandal at the very heart of the establishment.

Its interest and importance spreads far beyond Edinburgh.

Since The Scotsman is clearly unused to recognising facts, we will help it by spelling out a few.

Fact: We did not conspire with the suspect. He approached us only **AFTER** he had spoken with Nimmo Smith.

Fact: Politicians from all parties — including Labour's tireless Tam Dalyell — felt our story was in the public interest.

Fact: Sir Nicholas Fairbairn QC, a former Solicitor General for Scotland, thinks our revelations are so important the inquiry should be scrapped.

Conman

The Scotsman claims the incident has not fatally undermined the inquiry.

It insists the information we printed would have come out anyway when the report was published.

But editor Magnus Linklater completely misses the point — despite being Eton-educated like Mr Nimmo-Smith.

The crux of the argument is this.

Mr Nimmo Smith was easily fooled by one gay conman.

So how can anyone be sure others have not deceived him during his investigation.

The Scotsman wouldn't know a real story if it was fired through its window from the Edinburgh Castle cannon.