

## ARTS

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BY COLIN LEACH

Film director, visual effects artist and illustrator Paul Campion has worked on such films as *The Lord of the Rings* and *the Da Vinci Code*. He is in Guernsey on Saturday to introduce his film *Eel Girl* before CineGuernsey's screening of *Let the Right One In* and spoke to **Shaun Shackleton** about the current resurgence of appeal in the horror genre

# Horror attraction

**A** DOUBLE treat for horror film fans plus a special guest appearance are winging their way to the Princess Royal Centre for the Performing Arts on Saturday, courtesy of CineGuernsey.

The main feature will be acclaimed Swedish vampire film *Let the Right One In*. The film is described as a beautiful and touching piece, taking the audience through a coming of age friendship between Oskar, a lonely young boy, and his new neighbour Eli, who has a dark secret – she needs to drink human blood to survive.

'It's doing it a disservice to label it as just a horror film,' said CineGuernsey's David McGuigan.

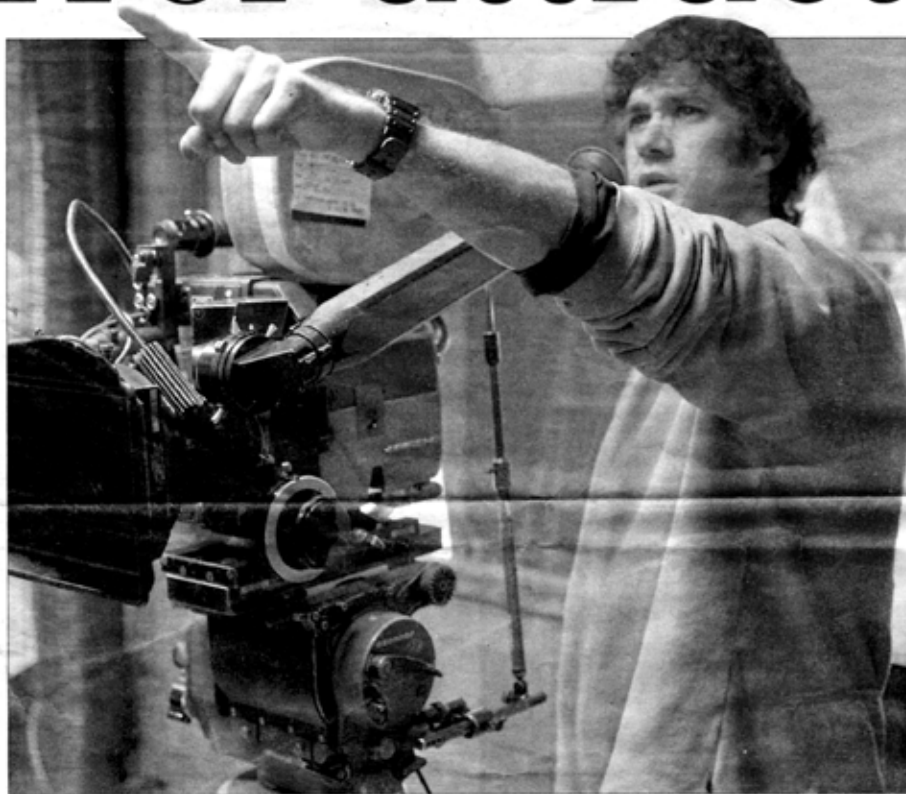
'While the subject matter does fit that bill in a way and there are shocking moments, it is much more than that, using themes of adolescence and revenge.'

Before the main feature, Anglo-New Zealand film director, film visual effects artist and illustrator Paul Campion will introduce – and then show – his film, *Eel Girl*.

In 1999 he completed an MD in computer animation and then moved to New Zealand to work as a texture painter on Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

He has also worked on *Sin City*, *X-Men 3* and *The Da Vinci Code*. Horror films have been coming back into fashion over the past few years. With so much real horror in the world, why does he think people still love these films?

'I think people have always enjoyed being scared – rollercoasters and haunted house rides at funfairs, telling ghost stories round a campfire – they all generate a very powerful physical and emotional response but in a fun and harmless way and a good horror film does



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exactly the same thing. 'Horror films also do well in times of recession or war. An audience can escape its day-to-day problems and for a few hours sit back and enjoy the group thrill of being scared and maybe even feel a little more alive.' Paul wasn't raised on Hammer horror films but TV sci fi series such as *Dr Who* and *Blake's 7*. 'I think my parents tried to discourage me from watching horror films, but I was always

fascinated by them.' What was it like working with the Lord of the Rings producer? 'I didn't really work directly with Peter Jackson, apart from just being present in meetings that he was attending, but he's very driven and very sure of exactly what he wants, and very inspirational.' 'I was working on the visual effect for all three Lord of the Rings films. My job was mainly as a texture painter, which involves painting the skin

surface texture of the digital creatures. 'I did a lot of work on the backgrounds when Gandalf escapes from the top of Orthanc. That entire scene was shot on a small set, then the surrounding landscape was painted and added digitally afterwards.' Despite being a regular visitor, Paul hadn't heard about Guernsey's folkloric past of witches and werewolves. 'I've been to Guernsey quite a few times as I've got a good

## Screening details

CineGuernsey at Princess Royal Centre for the Performing Arts. Doors open at 6.45pm. At 7.30pm Paul Campion will introduce and show his short film, *Eel Girl*, followed by *Let the Right One In*. Tickets are £6 for members, £7.50 for non-members and £5 for students and are available from [www.guernseytickets.com](http://www.guernseytickets.com) and the centre box office. The film is cert 15 and will be shown in Blu-Ray format.

friend who lives there, but he's never mentioned anything about witches and werewolves – possibly there's something he's not telling me.

'I'm keen to know more now maybe there's a feature film idea in there somewhere and Guernsey would make a great place to shoot a feature film, maybe even steal a bit of the limelight from Jersey and Bergerac.'

*Eel Girl* has logged 60,000 hits on the prestigious Sci-Fi-London website – some going for a short film.

'It's a dark and twisted love story.'

'It was inspired by the music in it and was originally meant to be a music video.'

'It's already had a very successful run around the world on the film festival circuit.'

Paul is now concentrating on working towards directing a full-length feature film. He and his producer, Elisabeth Pinto, have two horror films in development, *Dark Hollow*, which is about a satyr terrorising a sleepy English village, and *The Charnel House*, which is an action/zombie film, that goes back to the voodoo origins.

'We're also looking for financing, so if any of your readers are interested in investing in a feature film, please let us know.'