



# AUG-SEPTEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER The British Film Designers Guild

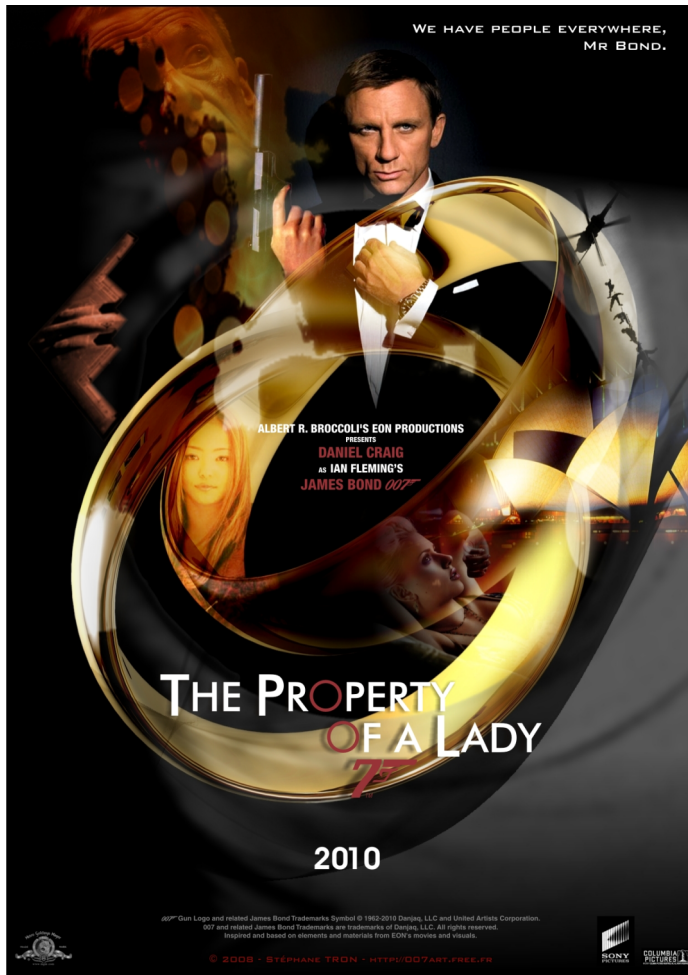


Promoting the  
**BRITISH ART DEPARTMENT**

Articles affecting the U.K. business...

## **MGM plans James Bond 23 for November 2012** **provided a producing partner can be found**

The bankrupt studio, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who filed a Chapter 11 petition on the 07<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010 in Bankruptcy Court, expressed an interest in fast-tracking James Bond and The Hobbit films



Business news source Bloomberg reports:

MGM plans to spend as much as \$125 million on operations in the next 15 weeks. MGM said it's has already spent \$20 million to fund production of films based on J.R.R. Tolkien's novel... New James Bond films may be released every second year starting in November 2012, MGM said. It aims to own 50 percent of Bond 23, due out that year, with an equal partner paying all of the production costs, it said. Later Bond movies would be wholly owned and funded by MGM, the company said.

[www.bloomberg.com/MGM](http://www.bloomberg.com/MGM)

## **Warner Bros and Leavesden Studios**

Warner Bros has bought Leavesden Studios in Hertfordshire, meaning a boost for the British film industry and improved facilities for TV production by the Hollywood studio in the UK. The US firm said it was planning a £100 million expansion of the studio, which was used for all eight Harry Potter films and other recent blockbusters such as The Dark Knight

and Inception. The US firm said it was planning a £100 million expansion of the studio, which was used for all eight Harry Potter films and other recent blockbusters such as The Dark Knight and Inception.

The expansion programme, due for completion in 2012, will mean the studios in Watford will represent around a third of Britain's total film stage space.

It will also include TV and ad productions. Warner Bros International Television Production was established a year ago and is looking to acquire indies in territories around the world; develop original local programming; and adapt studio content for local markets. Andrew Zein, former managing director of Tiger Aspect, was hired to run the unit.

It is the first time a Hollywood studio has purchased its own permanent production facility in the UK. Warner said the expansion would create around 1,500 jobs at the studio and a further 300 for building and specialist contractors.

Barry Meyer, its chairman and chief executive, said: "For 86 years, Warner Bros has been intrinsically involved in film production in the UK. Our purchase of Warner Bros Studios, Leavesden, and our multimillion-pound investment in creating a state-of-the-art, permanent UK film production base further demonstrates our long-term commitment to, and confidence in, the skills and creativity of the UK film industry."



The 170-acre site is currently being used to film the second Sherlock Holmes film, directed by Guy Ritchie. After the expansion the Leavesden studio will be capable of hosting two major films as well as advertising and television shoots.

The announcement came as work begins to build two new sound stages to house sets, costumes and props from the Harry Potter films. Fans of the series will be able to book tours of the new stages, which will be separate from the working studio. Warner Bros has spent £1.9bn on film production in the UK in the last decade, around 40% of total inward investment during that period.

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## **The Harry Potter dividend**

### **Harry Potter studio to have £100 million makeover.**

The Telegraph 15 Nov 2010

Some of Britain's best-known actors who are regulars in Harry Potter films speak approvingly of "the Harry Potter pension" – their small-percentage profit shares in a franchise so financially successful that it sets them up for life.

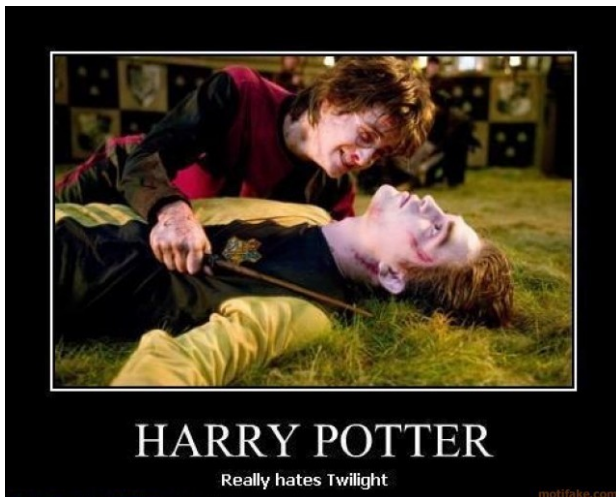
Now comes "the Harry Potter dividend". Warner Bros, the studio behind the films, is embarking on a £100 million re-building and expansion of Leavesden studios in Hertfordshire, where they are shot.

This is great news amid a tough year for the British film industry. It confirms Leavesden as a major studio capable of handling more than one big film at a time. It should mean more jobs for British talent.

When the eighth and last Harry Potter film opens next year, it's likely the franchise will have grossed some £4.4 billion worldwide. That's serious money. Good to see some of it being re-invested in Britain.

Still, the Potter revenues don't stop with cinema box-office sales. Home video sales are estimated at £800 million. And earnings from retail products – everything from action figures to toys, T-shirts, mugs and posters – have passed the £4 billion mark.

Then there's the attraction at **Florida's Universal Orlando Resort**, the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Whatever our thoughts on that word "wizarding", it should make money for years to come.



And let's not forget this bonanza sprang from the imagination of one author. JK Rowling's books will be children's favourites for generations to come. To date, 400 million Potter books have been sold in 69 languages. Not too shabby.

As an example of shrewd business dealing, the Harry Potter franchise is unsurpassed in the film industry. Yet when it comes to awards, the films themselves get only grudging respect. Their great **production designer Stuart Craig has received two Oscar nominations**, as has

composer John Williams. But no actor, director or screenwriter has been acknowledged, and a best film Oscar has never looked likely.

With the franchise nearing its end, might this change? A sentimental nomination for a supporting actor, maybe? Ralph Fiennes for Voldemort? Imelda Staunton as Dolores Umbridge? Or must the company find consolation in the Harry Potter pension?

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## **The Real Story Behind WB's Decision to Drop Harry Potter's 3D**

October 11, 2010

Variety <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118025495?refCatId=13>

Warner Brothers made a big surprising announcement late last week that **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1**, which was one of their big tentpole 3D releases, was not going to be released in 3D at all. They in effect "cancelled" the 3D release of the highly anticipated seventh movie, claiming only that "we were unable to convert the film in its

entirety and meet the highest standards of quality." Subsequently, haters of 3D everywhere rejoiced as this was the first time any major studio has dropped the 3D this close to a release. But there's more to it as Variety (via SlashFilm) has published an article looking at what exactly happened.

Apparently there were multiple, major problems that just started to stack up as the months went by, and the execs at Warner Bros were faced with a tough decision. They needed to choose between releasing the film in 3D in select theaters, changing the release date or canceling the 3D release entirely, which they went for in the end, but they weren't going to still just release it in 3D no matter what. The reason? They learned their lesson from **Clash of the Titans**. Variety says: "Warner learned from the experience, and execs decided they didn't want to take a risk with *Harry Potter*, one of the studio's crown jewels." This is why I consider WB to be one of the smartest studios in Hollywood and this is proof that they know what they're doing. But how did it get to this point to begin with? Let's take a closer look at what happened with *Deathly Hallows*.

The troubles with *Harry Potter*'s 3D started with **IMAX**, who was responsible for "subcontracting to other conversion vendors, tracking and quality control," as they were also behind the 12 minutes of 3D a few films back. But they weren't given the greenlight to begin until August, which was not enough time to convert it without looking terrible. Their attempt anyway began to fall behind schedule because director **David Yates** didn't lock the final cut until recently, with visual effects still being finished as well. And they can't convert until the effects are done. There aren't many 3D conversion companies out there yet, so when WB put out "emergency" calls to try and hire companies to work on it, they "couldn't find enough takers to catch up."

That was only just the beginning. WB was still struggling to figure out a solution and started making some desperate decisions. One of them involved pulling visual effects producer **Randy Starr** from the Hawaii set of *Journey 2: The Mysterious Island* (which is why that movie got pulled from the 2011 release schedule as well) to help with *Deathly Hallows*. Additionally, there has been some internal struggle at Warner Bros over 3D and the conversion process. There are companies created specifically for 3D conversion, but the job has been moving "from the post-production department to the **visual effects department**," and that's causing more troubles and internal struggles as well, as Variety goes on to explain in further detail.

"The industry is awakening to the fact that the 3D conversion business is in its infancy and is far less robust than the visual effects business," Variety says. And in one of the best statements I've read, they add that it, "reflects a growing realization, at Warner and at other studios, that existing processes for **overseeing 3D aren't reliable**." We all knew this, so why did it take them so long to figure it out? The problem with 3D is that, in comparison to the visual effects industry, there aren't a lot of companies that can do it well, so they can't call upon the hundreds of VFX houses to convert when they're in desperate need of making a release date. "There simply isn't a pipeline wide enough to do **large amounts** of quality 3D conversion **quickly**."

So what's the moral of the story? Well, any 3D haters would say just don't try and convert so many movies that don't need to be converted. Others would say that movies just need more time and money to actually get a proper conversion, which is something that I don't think any movie studio has realized yet. Plus, they don't really have much extra time, as they usually set release dates very close to when the movie's final cut will be locked, and that's when they're supposed to start converting. My suggestion is along the

line of the 3D haters - just give up on 3D unless it's extremely necessary. And for the *Harry Potter* franchise, it may be necessary.

For those who do want to see *Harry Potter* in 3D, there may be some good news. As there are still 9 months until **Part 2** of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* gets released next summer on July 15th, 2011, WB is still planning to release that one in converted 3D. Variety confirms: "Warner's focus now shifts to converting *Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, which the studio said will go out in 2D and 3D, as previously announced." There's also a rumour that they may try and finish converting Part 1 over these next 9 months and release that briefly before the second movie, which is a smart move, but we'll have to wait and see. Reflecting upon all of this, I think Warner Bros made some of smartest decisions of any studio in Hollywood and I applaud them for that.

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## **Danny Boyle:**

### **The director's latest success augurs well for the Olympics**

The level of audience engagement Danny Boyle inspires suggests his creation for the opening ceremony of the London Olympics will be a sensation

The Observer, Sunday 31 October 2010



We sometimes like to believe, in a world in which screens of all sizes bring us all manner of shock and gore, where our children's "gaming" involves routine, three-dimensional mutilation and mayhem, that our eyes have become desensitised to the sight of blood.

On this Halloween, it is perhaps heartening to report that all it took to have cinema audiences passing out in the London film festival was a blunt penknife. During the premiere of Danny Boyle's *127 Hours*, two people fainted, one man threw up in the aisle and a fair few made a dash for the exit. It was perhaps the most visceral focus group response since Aeschylus's introduction of the Furies to Athens caused "patriarchs to urinate and pregnant women into labour".

Boyle's film – his first since the Oscar winner *Slumdog Millionaire* – tells the true story of Aron Ralston who, while out pursuing the extreme sport of "canyoning" in the Utah desert, trapped his arm under an immovable boulder. For five days, Ralston tried to work his arm free; on the sixth, he took up his penknife and used its various dinky tools to perform a self-amputation.

Boyle has been slightly surprised by the more extreme reactions: "We've seen worse, haven't we?" He will have been encouraged by reports that even some of those who have swooned have, on regaining consciousness, remarked how much they enjoyed the movie.

The level of audience engagement the director inspires also augurs well for his two forthcoming projects: a staging of *Frankenstein* at the National Theatre and the creation of the opening ceremony for the London Olympics.

Boyle suggests that, in the spirit of the times, the latter will be very much a low-budget "back to basics" affair that will not attempt to compete with the monumental hoopla of Beijing. Having now proved he can create a sensation with just a rock and a rusty blade, however, we should not be unduly concerned.

Comment: A rumour is that Danny B is using a film production designer within his Olympic Team

**THE BRITISH FILM DESIGNERS GUILD PROUDLY ANNOUNCE ...**

**AN EVENING WITH PETER LAMONT.**

**SONJA KLAUS AND HER TOP TEAM HAVE ASSEMBLED A SUPERB SOCIAL EVENING FOR EXISTING MEMBERS WITH GUESTS FOR RISING STARS OF THE ART DEPARTMENT OF TOMORROW.**

**AN EVENING WITH PETER LAMONT**

**DATE: WEDNESDAY 1ST DECEMBER**

**TIMINGS: 6.30PM - 8.30PM**

**VENUE: FARLEY, 1 - 17 BRUNEL ROAD, LONDON W3 7XR**

**GUEST NUMBERS: MAX 120 (60 BFDG MEMBERS PLUS A GUEST WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN THE GUILD)**

**THERE WILL BE AN OPEN BAR (WINE, BEER, PETER'S FAVOURITE COCKTAIL) AND CANAPÉS FOR THE GUESTS. AN EXHIBITION OF PETER'S PAST WORK (CONCENTRATING ON TITANIC) AND A DISPLAY OF HIS AWARDS.**

**18.30HRS GUESTS ARRIVE**

**18.30HRS COCKTAIL AND CANAPÉ RECEPTION**

**19.00HRS CHAIRMAN WELCOME SPEECH  
AND INTRODUCTION OF PETER LAMONT**

**19.10HRS PETER LAMONT SPEECH**

**19.25HRS INFORMAL Q&A WITH AUDIENCE**

**20.30HRS RECEPTION ENDS**

**PLEASE RSVP TO MARY AT BFDG -**

**INFO@FILMDESIGNERS.CO.UK**

**OR GHISLANE KOHLER - GHISLAINE@HOTMAIL.COM**



## BRITISH FILM DESIGNERS GUILD

An evening with

# PETER LAMONT



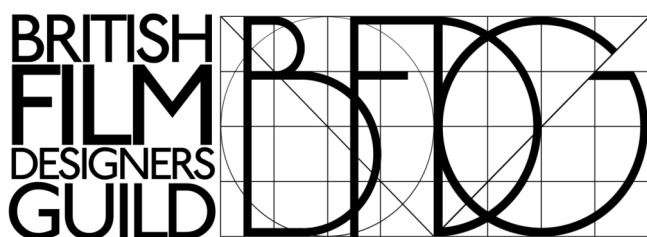
The committee of the British Film Designers Guild would like to invite you to an evening drinks reception in celebration of the Production Designer Peter Lamont

6.30 - 8.30PM WEDNESDAY 1ST DECEMBER

FARLEY 1-17 BRUNEL ROAD LONDON W3 7XR

R.S.V.P. [ghislaine@hotmail.com](mailto:ghislaine@hotmail.com)

Titanic image courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Films



Please join the Face book group for a fast and interactive interchange of views and comments. This month there have been some enquiries about member's availability and other "cries for help!" KP



**Gary Tomkins** Another interesting piece on Leavesden, Warners and the British film industry.

[http://m.guardian.co.uk/ms/p/gnm/op/sqWAZsvCB9k\\_R-DQO91AOkg/view.m?id=15&gid=bus  
iness%2F2010%2Fnov%2F14%2Fharry-potter-boost-british-  
film-industry&cat=business](http://m.guardian.co.uk/ms/p/gnm/op/sqWAZsvCB9k_R-DQO91AOkg/view.m?id=15&gid=business%2F2010%2Fnov%2F14%2Fharry-potter-boost-british-film-industry&cat=business)

 14 November at 16:35 via iPhone · Like · Comment



**Darren Tubby** I am finishing a job on the 18th of December and will be looking for work if anyone has a project starting up.

14 November at 16:01 · Like · Comment



**Gary Tomkins** [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/  
willgompertz/2010/11/cgi\\_britannia.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/willgompertz/2010/11/cgi_britannia.html)



**BBC – Gomp/arts: CGI Britannia**  
[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)  
about

 11 November at 14:57 · Like · Comment · Share



**Warren Lever** Very good. The last sentence especially ...Dame Rowling maybe? Hope so.....

13 November at 01:20 · Like

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## PRODUCTION NEWS

**X-men: First Class** / Pinewood / Dir Mathew Vaughn

PD Chris Seagers / Visual Consultant Russell De Rozario / SAD John Frankish / AD James Hambidge, Alan Gilmore, Grant Armstrong, Joe Howard, Su Whitaker / stby Ben Munro & Grant Armstrong / AAD Tom Weaving / JD Sophie Bridman, Richard Usher / CA Kim Frederiksen / CO-ord Pippa Needs/ SA Tony Chance / Graphics Jools Faiers / ADA James Corker, Dominique Pace / SD Sonja Klaus / AD Alex Cameron / GA Andrew Tapper / CM Leigh Gilbert

**Untitled Sherlock Holmes sequel**

PD Sarah Greenwood / SAD Niall Moroney / AD Matt Gray, James Foster /AAD Toby Britton, Ben Collins, Tom Still / D Lotta Wolgers, Nic Henderson / ADA Elliot Scott / CA David Allcock

**Woman in Black** / UK / Starring Daniel Radcliffe / PD Kave Quinn /AAD Andrew Palmer / GA Alan Payne /PM Jamie Wilkinson

**Game of Thrones** / Ireland / PD Gemma Jackson / SAD Paul Inglis / SD Sarah whittle , Richard Roberts

**Untitled Alien Prequel 1 & 2** / Pinewood / PD Arthur Max / SAD John King / AD Adam O'Neil, Marc Homes / AAD Peter Dome / D Helen Xenopoulos, Kate Grimble / JD Luke Whitelock, Richard Usher

**Jack Giant Killer** / Longcross - shoot Mar 2011?

PD Gavin Bocquet / SAD Peter Russell / AD Mark Harris / AAD Ben Collins / ADA Jake Hall

**Clash of the Titans 2** / Longcross

PD Charles Woods / SAD Ray Chan / AD Stuart Kearns /AAD Jane Harwood / D Andy Procter / ADA Camise Oldfield

**Life of Pi** / Location Taiwan & India / PD David Gropman /SD Anna Pinnock / CM Malcolm Roberts

**The Avengers** / New York / PD James Chinlund / SAD Jon Billington / AD Julian Ashby / AAD Steve Morahan

**Ghost Rider : Spirit of Vengeance** / Romania / PD Kevin Phipps / AD Steve Dobric / SD Dominc Capon

**Untitled Love Story** / Budapest / Dir Angeline Jolie

**Mad Max : Fury Road** / Australia / Dir George Miller

## Pre-Production...

**Gravity** / Framestore Soho / Dir Alfonso Cuaron / PD Andy Nicholson / AD Mark Scruton / Co-ord Heather Noble / 3D Mod Julian Caldwell, Paul Threadgold, Andrew Williamson, Rhys Pugh / GA Helen Koutas / CA Jim Cornish / SD Joanne woollard / PB Billy Edward

**The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel** / India / PD Alan MacDonald / SAD Peter Francis

**47 Ronin** aka Samurai / Pinewood / PD Jan Roelfs / SAD Gary Freeman / Budapest AD Les Tomkins, Snr AD Dave Allday, AD Rob Cowper, Guy Bradley / AAD Gavin Fitch, Patsy Johnson / SA Simon McGuire

**Men In Black 3** / New York / PD Bo Welch

**Mission Impossible : Ghost Protocol** / Canada

**Dredd aka Judge Dredd** / South Africa

**The Dark Knight Rises - Batman 3** / London & New York / PD Nathan Crowley

**The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** – trilogy / USA

**Robopocalypse** / USA / Dir Steven Spielberg / PD Guy Dyas

**Paani** / Shoot Spring 2011 / USA / PD John Myhre

? / Prep Jan 2011 / Canada / PD Chris Seagers

## Penciled Productions...

**Bourne Legacy** (Bourne 4) / Contrary to popular rumour Paul Kirby is not involved in the film

**Bond 23** / Prep 2011/ UK / PD Dennis Gassner

**Iron Lady** / Shoot Spring 2011 / UK

**Dark Shadow** / Prep 2011 / UK

**Seventh Son** / UK

**Kick –Arse 2 : Balls to the Wall** / UK / Dir Matthew Vaughn

**Snow White and the Huntsmen** / Shoot Spring 2011 / UK

**Untitled Directorial project** / South America / Shoot Spring 2011 / Dir Angeline Jolie

**Astro City** / Working Title

**Avatar 2** / USA

**Dracula:Year Zero** / Australia

**Dune** / Mexico

**The Man from U.N.C.L.E.** / USA

**Wizard of Oz** / Really?

Marvel comics / Several films penciled UK and Europe 2011-2013

Post-Production...

**Captain America: The First Avenger** / Shepperton

**The Invention of Hugo Cabret** / Shepperton

**Pirates of the Caribbean 4 - On Stranger Tides** / Pinewood

**War horse** / Longcross

**Thor** / USA / Dir Kenneth Brannagh

Available for work ... Remo Tozzi, Andrew Ackland-Snow, David Wood, Simon Wakefield, Keith Pain, Su Whitaker.

**FROM THE RUMOUR MILL...** And some of this info has to be considered just so.....If any Guild members have any more definitive information then please let the office know immediately!.....Please check with any individuals mentioned regarding availability... And do not quote or rely on any of this information!...

**Rumours are published for the benefit of the membership only!** Please let us know if anything is wrong, and it can be corrected.

Some enquiries the Guild has received have asked us not to publish information but would like to know available crew. So please keep us informed as this happens fairly frequently but we always respect privacy.

**And Finally,**

**Do please, feel free to contribute to the newsletter, by way of comment, with some copy material, news or any info for the RUMOUR MILL....anything that is seriously wrong then please post on Facebook!**

**Please send contributions via Mary in the office or to me directly by email.  
All submissions gratefully received.**

**I am aware that many people, other than members of the Guild, have sight of, and read this Newsletter each month. If you would like to apply to become a member, or express a point of view to the wider membership then please do sign up and get involved.**

**Kevin Phipps**

**Chair**

**BFDG**

**[kevinmhipps@gmail.com](mailto:kevinmhipps@gmail.com)**

**Mary Krauss**

**Administrator**

**British Film Designers Guild**

**Contact [info@filmdesigners.co.uk](mailto:info@filmdesigners.co.uk)**

**Address: British Film Designers Guild, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Bucks SL0 0NH**

**Telephone: 00 44 (0) 208 959 6909**

**Mobile: 00 44 (0)7889 569 106**